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### Nation Queer? Discourses Of Nationhood And Homosexuality In Times Of Transformation: Case Studies From Poland

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**Citation: Kulpa, Robert (2013) Nation Queer? Discourses Of Nationhood And Homosexuality In Times Of Transformation: Case Studies From Poland. [Thesis] (Unpublished)**

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**Nation Queer?**  
**Discourses Of Nationhood And Homosexuality**  
**In Times Of Transformation:**  
**Case Studies From Poland.**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**Birkbeck College**  
**University of London**

**London**  
**12 July 2012**

## **Declaration**

**I, Robert Kulpa, hereby declare that the thesis is my own work:**

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**Abstract**  
**Nation Queer? Discourses of Nationhood and  
Homosexuality In Times of Transformation:  
Case Studies From Poland.**

This thesis explores the relationship between discourses of nationhood and homosexuality in the context of Polish “post-communist transformations” that have taken place over the last decade. It begins with the hypothesis that there must be a more complex relationship between the two discourses than a situation where nationhood simply and straightforwardly rejects the homosexuality. As such, the thesis explores possibilities for going beyond (or further into) the dialectics of the same/other, as a way to develop understandings about the relationship between the nation and homosexuality. The focus is on undercurrents and internal dynamics, constantly negotiating and re-working mutual dependencies between the two discourses. In this context, the thesis is especially geared to exploring the “unforeseen” (or possible), the “wilful”, “unintended” (or hoped for) in the two discourses.

The thesis is organised around three major research problems: (1) How is homosexuality framed by national discourse (when performed by the nation-state)? (2) How do discourses of homosexuality relate to nationhood (in times of national distress)? (3) How might national/ist rhetoric be present in discourses of LGBT organisations? Methodologically, the thesis is grounded in a case study approach and discourse analysis. Overall, I argue that we may map out the relations between the nationhood and homosexuality through discourses of rejection as well as dependency, oscillating on the continuum between “sameness” and “otherness”. These relations are best described via the concepts of “dis-location”, “be-longing”, “attachment”, and “dis-identification”.

This research is important for at least three reasons. There is a scarcity of work about sexualities in Central and Eastern Europe and a need for more work in this area. Additionally, we have recently witnessed a rise of concern with “homonationalism” in queer studies. Attention to Poland is a valuable addition to this scholarship, which so far is about only the “West” and “Islam”. Finally, it also contributes to nationalism studies, where sexuality is still an under-explored topic, and it offers new insights for scholars interested in Polish nationalism studies.

# Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction: A journey from where I stand, to the theory, and back again...</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Research questions	13
1.2 Thesis outline	15
<b>Chapter 2 - Theoretical and methodological framework</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Theorising discourse	24
2.2 Identities and identifications	29
2.3 Power and knowledge	35
<b>Chapter 3 - Theorising nationhood</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1 Nation, globalization, and post-colonial theories	49
3.2 Nation, narration, and time	53
<b>Chapter 4 - Nationhood and (homo)sexuality</b>	<b>59</b>
4.1 Un-common times of modernity	65
4.2 Timely geographies	67
4.3 Nationalising sexuality	70
4.4 Homoeroticism, homosociality and nationhood	82
4.5 Summary	85

<b>Chapter 5 - Poland: national context</b>	<b>86</b>
5.1 Poland in the 19th century	87
5.2 National and individual	90
5.3 Polish cultural constructions of gender and sexuality	95
5.4 Mapping the Other: Poland between the “West” and the “East”	110
5.5 Conclusions	118
<b>Chapter 6 - State discourses</b>	<b>120</b>
6.1 Polish Parliament's resolutions from 2003 and 2006	121
6.2 Constitutive Other - Nation as an empty signifier in Lech Kaczynski’s National Address	127
6.3 Conclusions	140
<b>Chapter 7 - Attachment and belonging</b>	<b>143</b>
7.1. Polish melancholic nationalism	149
7.2. Homo-grief after the enemy: When gays and lesbians mourn President Kaczynski...	153
7.3. Conclusions: Mutual desire	167
<b>Chapter 8 - The quest for “ordinary”</b>	<b>170</b>
8.1. “Let Them See Us” (2003)	172
8.2 “Want Tolerance? So Choose One!” (2006)	189
8.3 States of belonging: The question of “sexual citizenship”	200
<b>Chapter 9 - Conclusions</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>239</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Vlastimil Hofman, "Madonna with a Child and St. John" (1909)</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Figure 2: Jacek Malczewski, "Polonia" (1914)</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Figure 3: Jacek Malczewski, "Polonia" (1914)</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Figure 4: Vlastimil Hofman, "Polonia and Polish Soldier", ca. 1915</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Figure 5: Cartoon by Andrzej Mleczko</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Figure 6: Map of Poland after WW II</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Figure 7: "Let Them See Us" Poster 1</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Figure 8: "Let Them See Us" Poster 2</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Figure 9: "Want Tolerance? So Choose One" Poster 1</b>	<b>190</b>

## Acknowledgement

As with any project, also this Ph.D. thesis was (in a way) a collaborative endeavour. It is so because of the on-going and priceless help and support given to me during the work on it. And this sustenance cannot be underestimated. If not a circle of people who were with me at the various stages of writing this thesis, it would be very hard to finish it.

First of all, the deepest gratitude and joyful thought goes to Prof. Lynne Segal and Prof. Sasha Roseneil - my fantastic supervisors, without whose guidance, encouragement, remarks, and willingness to engage in dialog, I would probably not go through (still quite mysterious) meanders of the British academic system and this research journey. (And even after all these years I still find myself rather puzzled about the system and its importance in shaping the knowledge. Thank you both!)

Secondly, it is to my absolutely fabulous fellow PhDs, in our pursuit of writing and the mutual support, which I cherish so much: Tuesday Bhambry, Calo Giametta, Simon Hutta, Joanne Kalogeras, Katherine Ludwin, Caroline Walters.

Then, it is to my chosen family of friends, for walking this path with me: Cuneyt Cakirlar, Beata Dziedzic, Adriana Gastaldi, Jonathan Kemp, Karolina Kosinska, Joanna Mizielińska, Alicja Rogalska, Agata Stasinska, Luis Torres, and Sylvia 'Joseph.Ine' Wozniak, and to so many other people close to my heart.

*C'è anche il posto speciale per il mio compagno, Riccardo Polveroni, su questa lista. Bru, tu sai che il mio dottorato e tu siete gli gemelli? TVB*

*I na koniec specjalne podziękowanie dla mojej mamy Ewy.  
Za wychowanie, za siłę za nadzieję. Po prostu: za wszystko.*

Thank you.



## ***Chapter 1***

### ***Introduction:***

#### ***A journey from where I stand, to the theory, and back again...***

The rapid changes in political and economic systems in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 also brought social and cultural turmoil, resulting in significant shifts in national cultures. In Poland, one of the most important problems is the re-configuration of the (new) notion of Polish nationhood<sup>i</sup>. This is so because Polish national identity was tightly related to the idea of struggle for "Freedom" and "Liberty" (against/from Prussian and German, Russian and Soviet empires). So with the collapse of state communism in 1989, when "Freedom" was finally "won" (or so at least it was thought) the notion of Polishness has necessarily had to change (I explore these issues in greater depth in the Chapter 5). This "Freedom", however, brought about consequences that for many could not be foreseen before the collapse of one regime and the arrival of another. Two such "bastard children of the revolution" emerging in the wake of the 1989 collapse were the feminist (non state-sponsored, as during the communism), and homosexual (soon after re-labelling itself as LGBT) movements (Flam 2001). So we see that the post-1989 creation of the "new state" of Poland was indeed not only about the political and economic systems of its organisation, but also opened the space for struggles and tussles in the creation of the "new nation" of Poland, where new social movements began to play a role. The extent of social movements' participation in these processes is also a matter of other studies already under way (Jawłowska 2007; Kubik 2007; Kubik and Wenzel 2007).

For my purpose, what is symbolically important here is this co-emergence of the "new Poland" with the springing up of "new communities" of homosexual people, who were self-organising (LGBT) and beginning to voice their group interests (as gays and lesbians)<sup>ii</sup>. In this thesis I trace how in these times of so-called "post-communist transformation" nationhood relates to the "new reality",

and in this context, I am especially interested in how the figure of the homosexual becomes an important "player" in the Polish national imagination. Equally, I am captivated by the role that Polish nationhood plays in emerging LGBT politics, and in gay and lesbian communities. These interests stem partially from experiences of growing up as a person who systematically came to understand himself to be non-heterosexual; and who happened to live exactly at the moment of that "great change" that came in 1989, bonding my adolescence with the adolescent years of the "new Poland", and those of the LGBT movement. But my inquisitiveness is also inspired by much later education, and the development of my academic interests in cultural and queer studies.

Another important influence has been the growing number of queer studies publications on nationalism and neoliberalism. This particular body of work is now often referred to as "homonationalism" or "sexual nationalism" studies (discussed in greater detail in the Chapter 4). Overall, the thesis is inter- and trans-disciplinary in its broadly defined humanities and social scientific epistemological location. In the deployment of the theoretical, methodological, and analytical approaches, it draws on cultural studies, social anthropology, and cultural sociology. The thesis is grounded in queer studies, discourse studies, and relates to area studies (Slavonic/Polish studies) and nationalism studies. By bringing these disciplines and approaches together, I hope to contribute to each of them by examining overlooked or underexplored connections, topics or possibilities. For example, there is a scarcity of work about sexualities in Central and Eastern Europe (Stulhofer and Sandfort 2004; Kuhar and Takács 2007; Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011b), therefore this thesis responds to a need for better understandings of issues related to sexuality in this regional context, as much as to a need for deeper consideration of the CEE in a gender and sexuality studies context. Additionally, recent developments in queer studies show heated debates about sexuality and nationality in European, "Western", and global contexts (e.g. Puar 2007; Jivraj and De Jong 2011). However, as most of these works focus on relations between "Europe"/"West" and "Islam"/"Other", my attention to Poland and CEE should be a valuable addition to this element of queer studies

scholarship. Lastly, it also contributes to nationalism studies, where sexuality is still an under-explored topic of research (Pryke 1998).

There is, however, a third spur for this research project, one that again links my “personal” experiences with the “academic” endeavour. Here is the story... The writing of this PhD has been a long, and ongoing, peregrination for me. Before I introduce the key research questions examined in the thesis, let me take you on a journey; wander with me as I recursively recreate this passage of time, finishing and writing up the whole thing. Here I offer a “personal” story of how I came to write what you are now reading.

It is not uncommon today to read academic work that strikes personal notes of where the authors are coming from, what their social or political views are, especially in relation to the issues they elaborate. This shift from a purely positivist stance ("objective researcher") to a self-reflexive one (questioning the very possibility of "objectivity") dates back to the 1960s when some of the most important works of critical inquiry into epistemological foundations of contemporary knowledge(s) were written (Carr 1987; Kuhn 1996; Foucault 2002). Throughout the 1970s, flourishing ("new") social movements - such as feminism, black liberation, and lesbian and gay liberation - strongly incorporated the issue of "location" into their agenda and made it one of their primary objects of critique (Stoddard 1997). In particular, feminist debates over “standpoint theory: that continued during the 1980s (although the term came later) (see e.g. Harding 1991; Harding 2004; Hekman 2004) and discussions about "situated knowledges" in the 1990s (e.g. Visweswaran 1994; Haraway 1997) brought "self-reflexivity", "situated knowledge" and the "politics of location" to my attention. These works have inspired my own outlook.

However, the practice of acknowledging one's own roots may easily slip into a meaningless enumeration of categories (white, homo, working class, etc.) and thereby lose its focus and significance. This is why I find a fragment from Donna Haraway's *"Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan©\_Meets\_OncoMouse"* (1997) still so important and worth reminding myself of. She writes that

[s]trong objectivity<sup>iii</sup> insists that both the objects and the subjects of knowledge-making practices must be located. Location is not a listing of adjectives or assigning of labels such as race, sex, and class. Location is not the concrete to the abstract of decontextualization. Location is the always partial always finite, always fraught play of foreground and background, text and context, that constitutes critical inquiry. Above all, location is not self-evident or transparent (1997, 37).

Not only is it important to read, but it is as important to keep practising such "writing oneself into the analysis", as "we have not written ourselves in nearly enough" (Presser 2005, 2067). Yet even this is not enough for Lois Presser. Elaborating on her own methodological problems as a female researcher working in prison settings with men penalised for domestic violence, she rightfully notices that such meeting/work is an ongoing process involving negotiating positions for both researcher and researched. Thus, "we must go beyond simply writing ourselves into research interviews to writing our exchanges into them ... [because] ... relations of power between interviewer and participant become part of interview data" (Presser 2005, 2086). This can be easily extended to any research method, not only the interview. Presser's position here resonates well with my purpose of examining relations (also and necessarily of power) between the national and homosexual subject positioning in Poland, and opens a space for me to consider the locations my research begins with, and how they have changed over the course of my research journey. Today is Friday the 02.09.2011 and these words from the first draft of this chapter, which were written on Wednesday the 19.02.2009 come again to me:

*Why am I doing this research? Far from any grandiosity of "historical earthquakes", I live in London because I have chosen to do so, but the choice was, after all, possible thanks to the collapse of state socialism in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and later thanks to the European Union (EU) enlargement in 2004. I have been living here also because I could not get myself a stable income and secure basic living conditions in Warsaw. But also I have come*

*here, because I was a poof, a faggot, and I was afraid to travel back home at night from a club, because I looked like one. And I wanted to look like one, I wanted to be, and to look like, a camp queen. And it just happened that I have paid some painful consequences for it. Then I became too scared and too tired of being a flaming queen. I stopped dressing up, my tastes shifted and evolved, but the psychological discomfort remained. So I began dreaming about an escape to (what I saw as) the "land of freedom". Once again, I believed the West would bring a salvation. And here I am, living my dream, although this life is far from a dream. Working in a bar to secure a basic stable income, I am also constantly ordered at the bottom of the classist ladder of British society as a "Polish boy", an emigrant who is meant to do low paid service jobs. As one of the chatty clients once so sharply noted: "Perhaps one day you could get yourself some qualifications, perhaps even go to university?" I did not try to explain to him that I, who had just served him a "pint-of-lager-mate" and who was so obviously at the bottom of his imaginary social strata, not only had university qualifications, but was also on course to obtain a doctorate. And so here I am again, living my dream life that is, indeed, what I have always wanted to do: get the doctorate, do academic research, teach at a university.*

I am telling this story to show that these very "personal" (hi)stories are indeed inseparably and crucially intertwined conditions of my doing this research and finalising this thesis. In a way, it is a story of two worlds, of living "in-between", of constant identifications and dis-identifications, of trying to forget about the "past", and constantly being reminded about it through particular placement in the "present". It is as if I am "here" and "there", and yet in neither place. How does this all affect my research?

I work within "Western" (British) academia, writing about "Eastern European" (Polish) subjects, hence necessarily incorporating (through structural arrangements, but also my own decisions) the "Western gaze" to a certain degree<sup>iv</sup>. Yet what has also preoccupied me in this research has been the relation of power and inequality between regional and cultural designations of "the West" and "the Rest" (Stewart Hall 1992) in contemporary currents of knowledge

production. I am an 'insider' and 'outsider' at the same time - a positionality full of contradictions. Whilst this limbo position is problematic sometimes, it has also been a productive source of inspiration and insight. Trinh T. Minh-ha's writings have influenced me as I have navigated and mapped out my own subjectivities, mixing "personal" and the "academic" positionalities together. She writes about the status of post-colonial women, artists, "insiders" working in the "outside" (i.e. "Western") context. Minh-ha claims that this ambiguous position in which subjects find themselves may in fact bring at least some degree of a discomfort to the dominant discourses. She writes:

The moment the insider steps out from the inside she's no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not quite an insider and not quite an outsider. She is, in other words this inappropriate other or same who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you' while persisting in her difference and that of reminding 'I am different' while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at (Minh-ha 1990, 375).

Here I have given an account of the social locations that I consciously and (un)willingly embody. After locating my thesis disciplinary, it is a way to locate myself in the research, since I recognise personal experiences and stories of identity, being identified, identifications and, not less importantly, dis-identifications, as the important stimulus for this research. I now proceed to elaborate on the research questions and methodological approaches used to answer them.

## **1.1 Research questions**

Mapping out the relations between discourses of nation and homosexuality does have two, very broadly sketched, directions: the role of the constructed figure of the homosexual<sup>v</sup> in national narratives, and (the reverse) the importance of nationhood in discourses of homosexuality. In recent writings that try to approach

these problems (e.g. Graff 2008), most of the attention is given to the former, somehow forgetting about the latter possibilities. In order to avoid this unbalanced approach, I also ask what role Polishness plays for homosexual subjects in Poland<sup>vi</sup>.

This is an important question because the (post-1989) formation of gay and lesbian identity and community in Poland is a direct consequence of the national struggle for freedom and liberty. Therefore it is important to ask about how homosexual subjects relate to their nationhood? How does each side respond to the claims of the other side? Thus the central research problem of this thesis is the relation between discourses of homosexuality and nationhood, analysed in the context of Poland, and using case studies spanning the last decade.

Rather than seeing their relation as fixed and stable dyads such as same/other, inclusion/exclusion, and so on, I am more interested in undercurrents and internal dynamics, constantly negotiating and re-working mutual dependencies of the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality. In this context, the thesis is especially focused on exploring the "surprising" (or not), the "unwilling" (or wilful), "unintended" (or hoped for), and "unforeseen" (or possible) in the two discourses. Such a focal point is invested in explorations of complexity and diversity of relations, charting out the possibilities, rather than fixing answers. The thesis is organised in relation to the following questions:

◆ **How is homosexuality framed by national discourse (when performed by the nation-state)?**

I am particularly interested here in how strong this relation is, and whether we can even hypothesise about the mutual dependency of discourses of nation and homosexuality? I explore the extent to which the figure of the homosexual is essential to the contemporary state discourses of Polish nationhood in the Chapter 6.

◆ **How do homosexual subjects relate to nationhood (in times of national distress)?**

◆ **How can national rhetoric be present in discourses of the LGBT organisations?**

The last two questions are addressed directly in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively. Here we also face a (more general in nature) problem whether there is a possibility of sexual (or any other, for that matter) politics outside the national frame? In other words, can we “avoid” or “escape” the nation as a reference for any social activity?

These questions reflect my concern with the complex ways in which nationhood and homosexuality are related. This relation is often perceived as mutually exclusive, based on rejection, exclusion and denial (see e.g. Graff 2008). My aim is to scrutinise this presumption in the case of Poland and its cultural transformations in the last decade, trying to map out some of the possibilities that are less commonly acknowledged. As such, my work is inspired by Michel Foucault's (1980; 1998; 2000), since he attempted to go beyond understandings of power as something only forbidding and enclosed. He demonstrated the potential productivity of power relations, showing how its manipulatory and prolific mechanisms hold potential for reinvention and (re?)creation. In a similar vein, I aim to see relations between discourses of nation and homosexuality, as tied up not only with rejection but also with resistance, subversion, contribution, and dependency of the manifold national and sexual subjectivities.

## **1.2 Thesis outline**

The thesis consists of nine chapters, each further divided into sub-chapters, and sections. Chapters 2-5 establish the theoretical, socio-political and historical contexts within which my analysis (Chapters 6-8) takes place. Specifically, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the thesis whilst the third chapter contextualises my work in relation to literature concerned with nationhood, national identities and nationalism, taking into consideration ‘macro’, ‘meso’, and ‘micro’ levels of analysis. I discuss nation in the context of globalisation and post-colonialism, paying particular attention to location, map, place, and concepts of mimicry and agency. The fourth chapter offers a critical overview of literature concerning nationhood and (homo)sexuality. “Critical” here means that I review existing writings through a prism of Central and Eastern



European geo-temporal, cultural and political *loci*, also attempting to build a problem-oriented framework of reference to which I can return later in the thesis and which informs my analytical outlook. There I discuss topics of time and temporality, geography, power and hegemony in the formations of national and sexual cultures. Chapter 4 also engages with the recent literature about "homonationalism" and "sexual nationalism", showing how these studies deal primarily with "Western" and Western European contexts, not necessarily translating well (or at all) to a Central and Eastern European *locale*.

Chapter 5, "Poland: national context", provides the reader with background information about the formation of "traditional Polishness", i.e. the set of constitutive elements of what is, or could be said to be, the national identity in Poland. This includes a discussion of various types of "otherness" as important figures against which Polish national identity was constructed before the collapse of state communism in 1989. I talk about traditional cultural approaches to sexuality and how they may remain in relation to the geographical position of Poland between the "West" and the "East". This, in turn invokes themes of martyrdom and victimhood. However, I also insist on reading Polish history as a history of "colonialism" – for example, as evidenced by the treatment and experiences of Jewish people, or eastern "borderlands" of Poland.

Having established the theoretical framework from within which I am working, the following three chapters focus on analysis. Each one revolves around a different case study, mapping out intertwined relations and connections between discourses of the nation and homosexuality in Poland. In Chapter 6 I analyse state discourses as represented in the resolutions of the Polish Parliament and in one Presidential speech. Using elements of Discourse Theory, I show how the figure of the homosexual is constructed as a national threat and one of the main new (post-1989) "others". However, whilst framed as oppositional and exclusive, this chapter helps to demonstrate how the two discourses remain in a tight relation of dependency where the national discourse needs the figure of the homosexual as much as it claims to be free (or indeed, under attack) from it.

In the second of the analysis chapters, "Attachments and belonging", I look at the aftermath of President Kaczynski's tragic death in a plane crash in April 2010, and am concerned with understanding why gay and lesbian people mourned their infamously homophobic president. In examining this extraordinary case of national bereavement and the collective performance of grief, I point to complex models of attachment that position Polish homosexual subjects in a locus where they are able to enter the national discourse as subjects, and not only as objects. This "overtaking" does not require outside recognition of the willing (if not wilful) subject. I also highlight the role of identification rather than identity in grasping the dependencies between discourses of the nation and homosexuality.

Finally, the penultimate chapter of the thesis is a case study of two LGBT campaigns. Where Chapter 7 was about the "extraordinary" (catastrophic death of the President), Chapter 8 traces the "ordinary" and "normal", looking at strategies of LGBT groups. Drawing on concepts of respectability and "banal nationalism" I show how the two case study campaigns weave sexual subjectivity into (neoliberal) cultural politics of individualisation and productivity. I show how "baby capitalism" and the "new reality" of post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe, becomes a counterpart of an emerging "sexual citizenship", deployed as an important strategy of LGBT groups in Poland. The final clause to this thesis, a summary of findings, and implications for further research are contained in the Conclusions chapter.

## ***Chapter 2***

### ***Theoretical and methodological framework***

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical and methodological framework informing my research, building towards the critical and analytical engagement offered in subsequent chapters. I begin with an overview of case study methodology and the rationale informing my selection of cases before going on to explain my understanding of discourse, differentiation between identities and identifications, and finally ruminating on Foucault, power/knowledge and my epistemological placement as the “Eastern European academic” in the global system of knowledge production.

I would like to open this chapter by drawing on Paula Saukko’s book *“Doing Research In Cultural Studies”* (2003), where she explains why her work is about “methodology” rather than about “methods”. She explains that while method is more like a tool, a technical operation, methodology combines tools and epistemological commitments that come with a particular approach, thus encompassing a wider field of philosophical concern. Of course, methods and methodologies go in pairs, and stimulate each other. However, while one method could be used to pursue more than one methodological commitment, the reverse is not true (Saukko 2003, 8). Because this research is also concerned with the epistemological questions of ‘geographies of knowledge production’, and the relation of the ‘center’ to the ‘periphery’, the ‘universal’ to the ‘particular’, the two methodological approaches adopted here are those of case studies and discourse analysis.

In proceeding with the explanation for the choice of case studies, the work of John Gerring (2007) is helpful. He argues:

[t]he case study – of an individual, group, organization or event – rests implicitly on the existence of a micro-macro link in social behavior. It is a form of cross-level inference. Sometimes, in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples. We gain better understanding of the whole by

focusing on a key part (Gerring 2007, 1).

In light of his words, when this approach applied to the study of nationhood and homosexuality, one will be able to capture the dialogic nature of the social and individual, macro and micro, 'universal'/'general' and 'particular'/'individual'.

Similarly, we should ask why discourse analysis? One reason is that it is a methodology that is able productively to capture the interdependency between the macro, meso and micro levels of social coexistence. Hence it enables us to link and "translate" the singularity of the studied cases onto generalized theoretical conclusions each study seeks to advance (to different extents, naturally). Discourse analysis is potentially able to suggest new ways of overcoming the deadlock in the structure/agency debate in social sciences (Blommaert 2005), and is effective method of analysing nationhood (Sutherland 2005), sexuality (A. M. Smith 1994), and identity/identification (De Fina, Schiffirin, and Bamberg 2006). More nuanced explanation of how I understand and conceptualise discourse in this thesis follows in the next section.

Finally, there is also a question of why to mix the (any) two (or any other number) of methodologies and/or methods? The answer is simple but not simplistic. By assembling the two methodologies together, finding their points of junction and divergences, paints more dense, "thick" and intricate a picture of the studied phenomena. It must be clear, however, that methodological synergy strives towards better understanding of that which never can be full comprehended (for it would be simplistic, not simple, to say that we can grasp *the whole* dimension of social and cultural reality as it is). This speaks to the epistemological grounding of this research, which in accordance with contemporary critical approaches in humanities and social sciences, questions the possibility of "total understanding", "realism" and "objectivity" of any academic endeavour. This comes close to the mentioned distinction between the 'method' and 'methodology' (Saukko 2003). And similar argument is expressed by Lauren Berlant in her editorial to the special issue of *Critical Inquiry* "On the Case" (2007). Berlant suggests that many existing books on case studies are rather instrumental and technical (thus about "method" in Saukko's definition), and not

enough “theoretical” (which could translate onto “methodology”), especially for humanists.

So to summarise the reasons for the convergence of case studies and discourse analysis, it is their fascination with the interplay between the grand and the particular, the social and the individual, the national and the homosexual, as I put it in this work, that is particularly useful for me. But what is the case study? This is a question troubling many authors. Indeed, the multiplication of definitions and understandings of ‘case study’ has produced an array of possibilities (e.g. Platt 1988; Pole and Burgess 2000; Lauren Berlant 2007; Yin 2009). Particularly fitted from my research seems the one proposed by Berlant (2007). She defines ‘case study’ as follows:

It is an instance of something (violated law, failed informational impact). It is a synonym for argument, as in “making a case for.” It is a genre that organizes singularities into exemplary, intelligible patterns, enmeshing realist claims (x really is exemplary in this way) with analytic aims (if we make a pattern from x set of singularities we can derive y conclusions) and makes claims for why it should be thus (Berlant 2007, 670).

Her operationalization of the case study seems to offer best methodological and theoretical a response to the study of ongoing multidimensional complexities, which I suggest are characteristic to the relationship(s) between the discourses of nation and homosexuality.

### *The choice of cases*

My arguments are highlighted and developed through an exploration of five cases, considered over the course of three chapters (six to eight). Each case exemplifies a different aspect and plurality of the relationships between discourses of nation and homosexuality.

In Chapter 6, I explore cases in relation to the question of how homosexuality is framed by national discourse (when performed by the nation-state). I chose to focus on cases that related to the presidency and parliament, as these are key sites in which nationhood is expressed. I examine a resolution made

by the Polish Sejm (the lower chamber of the Parliament) in 2002 about “confirmation of Polish values” and the President Kaczynski's National Address speech (17.03.2008), as two instances of state discourses about nationhood and homosexuality. Here I deploy textual analysis of the parliamentary resolutions, and an audio-visual analysis of a television presentation.

The particular Parliamentary resolution I analyse is drawn on because of its particularity - a resolution on “Polish values” that is only one sentence long, and that was made public just before the national referendum on whether Poland would join the EU. Additionally, this resolution foregrounds the discourse of “Polish values” versus “EU moral threat” that is deployed in the President Kaczynski's National Address speech. The importance of this particular speech lies in the fact that it is rare for the President to directly link Poland, the UE, and homosexuality in a state “document” as opposed to expressing a “mere” private opinion on them (e.g. in an interview). Additionally, since the national address speeches are unusually rare in the Polish political culture, (reserved for the moments of the extraordinary importance like Gen. Jaruzelski's famous speech introducing the martial law in 1981), Kaczynski's 2008 speech is partially dedicated to the “threat” of homosexuality, and therefore seems particularly well suited for analysing the discourses of nation and homosexuality.

In Chapter 7, I seek to understand the importance of nationhood for the gay and lesbian community. I do so through exploring questions around lesbian and gay participation in the national rituals of mourning and bereavement. As a case, I look at the week of national bereavement that took place following the death of President Kaczynski in a plane crash in April 2010. This choice of case stems from my original surprise at discovering that lesbian and gay communities were partaking in national rituals of bereavement to the same extent as everyone else. My surprise and initial incomprehension at this dynamic informed the research question explored in Chapter 7: *why would homosexual people mourn after the outspokenly homophobic president?* This particular case touches directly on the tensions between discourses of homosexuality and discourses of Polishness and, as such, constitutes the *locus* of my analysis in this thesis.

I explore the question - in part - via internet users' posts in online discussions archived as commemorative articles published on lesbian and gay websites. However, mine is not an empirical study of the internet as such (for the rich methodological literature on using internet in a sociological study, see, e.g. Jones 1999; Dicks et al. 2005; Daniel 2011). There are at least two methodological issues that need to be addressed here: representativeness and ethics of research. I do not claim that the online posts and discussions I investigate are in any sense representative of the entire lesbian and gay community since I do not think "full representation" is possible at all (cf. Stuart Hall 1996), or that there is one such group as a "gay and lesbian community". I treat these voices more as discursive instances that contribute to the wider framework of discourses on homosexuality and nation. In terms of the ethics of using internet forums for my own research purposes (cf. The Information Society 1996; Brownlow and O'Dell 2002), I treat online posts as texts of the public domain. It is so, because they are publicly available to see and reply to, by anyone, without any need to register or agree to any (special) terms and conditions.

There is one simple reason for my choice of internet discussions as sources of analytical material. Online forums were the only "live" and available sites of activity and discussion during the national bereavement week, as all other social and cultural institutions and outlets were either shut down, suspended, or inactive (cf. Chapter 7). The three main gay web portals on which the discussions took place were [gejowo.pl](http://gejowo.pl) (oriented towards the club scene, and scene gossip), [innastrona.pl](http://innastrona.pl) (more 'serious' in character, aiming at news and community service, an information portal), and [homiki.pl](http://homiki.pl) (non-commercial, as the two others, with clear cultural and intellectual aspirations). The analysed discussions in Chapter 7 form article comments under the commemorative articles, and are not forums, for these are only available to logged in users, requiring membership and acceptance of websites terms and conditions. The article comment option does not require previous membership, so that every reader can post their response to the article, and to the previous comments. Indeed, these exchanges are resembling

discussions and exchanges among the commentators speaking to each other, and only occasionally a new voice is added in relation to the article. Posts can be deleted by the webmaster, but cannot be modified by the user once posted. Because commenting does not require login, it is hard to envisage a group profile beyond the information gathered from the textual analysis of the posts. For those who do have profile as members, the possible accumulative overview would still be highly problematic, as profiles are voluntary, and selectively used by registered members. Hence the accretive image could not be defended as accurate or representative. As a general observation though, it can be said that commentators are mostly young male adults, as this is the general gender/age profile of the websites. They mostly recruit from the urban centers, and who have an easy and private access to the internet. This is still not as popular for the Polish households as it is in the UK.

Building on findings from Chapter 7 about the relations between the discourse of nation and homosexuality in “extraordinary times”, in Chapter 8 I examine discourses of LGBT organisations, as performed during “ordinary” times. Chapter 8 is therefore concerned with two campaigns that ran in Poland during the 2000s. One called “Let Them See Us” (2002) which was organised by the Campaign Against Homophobia (CAH), and the other entitled “Want Tolerance?” (2006) organised by Lambda Warsaw Association. I examine a range of materials produced by campaigners and other discursive instances. I offer a visual analysis of photographs and other graphic materials (posters), textual analysis of promotional texts from leaflets and websites set up by organisers. I also use mainstream newspaper articles and interviews with participants and organisers of the campaigns to broaden my analytical context.

By looking at these campaigns I hope to shed some light on how Polish homosexual subjects understand themselves in relation to the nation and Polishness. The analysis ponders the meanings that homosexual subjects ascribe to their identities (“gay”, “lesbian”, “Pole”), and possibly indicate ambivalences and tensions present in the relationship between them. This is because these campaigns are expressions of how LGBT organisations perceive the situation of



non-heterosexual people in Poland, and what they do about it. Analysis of these discourses of homosexuality and nation will highlight issues deemed most important by the LGBT organisations (hence presumably the gay and lesbian folk, since the organisations' claim - much disputed, to be sure - to represent the community), since they were chosen as public campaigns to educate the majority of society.

## 2.1 Theorising discourse

The study of a language as social phenomena has a long and well-established tradition. It has been approached from various disciplinary angles (e.g. anthropology, linguistics, literary theory, psychology, etc.), producing various sub-disciplines and schools (e.g. sociolinguistics, discursive psychology, linguistic anthropology), and operating on various levels of analysis, from micro (sociolinguistics), through meso (discursive psychology), to macro horizons (Foucauldian approach). What they all seem to have in common are three conceptions. The first one is: "language and interaction are best understood in context"; the second, "social reality is socially constructed", and finally, they all look "beyond the literal meanings of language" (Shaw and Bailey 2008, 4).

Interest in language and the sphere of the "discursive" that developed in academia during the 1960s grew from dissatisfaction with predominantly positivist epistemologies that dominated academic work at the time. The re-evaluation of Marxism and its cultural "revival", alongside emerging cultural studies in the 1970s and 1980s, wider social revolts and other expressions of discontent with the *status quo*, all played their role in the formation of "critical studies", of which discourse analysis is part. Discourse studies are now well established and rich an approach, with hundreds of books, articles, dedicated journals, research centres and "schools". The proliferation of work in this area means that there are many different understandings and uses of the concept of "discourse" and "discursive analysis". Mine is the following, first proposed by Jan Blommaert (2005, 3):

[d]iscourse to me comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use. Discourse is one of the possible names we can give to it, and I follow Michel Foucault in doing so. What is traditionally understood by language is but one manifestation of it; all kinds of semiotic 'flagging' performed by means of objects, attributes, or activities can and should also be included for they usually constitute the 'action' part of language-in-action.

As the proposed definition clearly departs from the realm of language and incorporates material conditions of social communication, it is necessary now to introduce two approaches that have contributed to such understanding of the discourse.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is often treated as a "school" of study, with the most notable examples including the work of, among others, Norman Fairclough (1995), Ruth Wodak (1999), Paul Chilton (2003) and Teun van Dijk (1996). Inspired by Michel Foucault's philosophy and previous discursive analytical traditions, CDA also draws heavily on social theory (especially Anthony Giddens' "theory of structuration" (Giddens 1995; 1st ed. 1986), as an attempt to overcome the structure-agency deadlock, and reconcile many social and theoretical dichotomies. The other significant factor is the strong stress put on the keyword "critical". CDA's strong emphasis (at least in its ideal conception) on self-reflexive positioning of the researcher in the analytical process asks for putting researcher's own beliefs and ideological perspectives upfront, rejecting false, as it is believed, presumptions about any "objectivity" of academic research. Indeed, the main task of CDA is to make visible the mechanisms of social, cultural and political reproduction of inequalities and discriminatory practices (Fairclough 2001; Wodak 1997).

Despite being "critical", CDA has received its own critiques. The three major concerns can be seen as: (1) the vagueness of the analytical models offered, (2) the dominance of linguistic analysis and lack of attention to non-linguistic forms of discourse, (3) the lack of sufficient self-reflexivity on the part of the discourse analyst about her or his own powerful position in the research process

(Blommaert 2005, 31–33; Howarth 2000, 8). Accordingly, to account for these shortcomings, we might want to think not only about power, but also about the conditions and the outcomes of power. Blommaert's operationalisation of Critical Discourse Analysis, together with advances of Dalia Gaveriely-Nuri (2012) and Shi-xu (2005) on “cultural discourse analysis”, which encourage us to see discourse not only as linguistic phenomena, but strongly rooted in materiality of everyday lives, is an example of how to do it.

Since the *foci* of CDA scholars are: political discourses, ideology, racism, economics, gender, education, and so on, their lineage in ‘critical’ studies is clear. As such, the use of the modified CDA approach to the study of nationhood and homosexuality will offer an excellent entry point for the case-based studies and analysis in the forthcoming chapters.

### Discourse Theory

The Discourse Theory (DT) drawn on in this thesis was elaborated first by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau (2001). DT is rooted in the three major traditions of Marxism, structuralism and hermeneutics, however reworking them for own purpose. So there is more stress on subjective agency, and on historicising and extending relations between the objects/subjects. DT is also less about reconstructing meanings or discovering the existence of any “hidden” truths, but more about preoccupation with the ways that meanings and concepts are produced (Howarth 2000, 10-12). Since I use some of the conceptual tools of the DT in later analysis (esp. Chapter 6), I will first outline the DT framework here, and then present the notions used later in the thesis.

At its most basic, “discourse” is understood there as the system of meanings that are responsible for creating, maintaining and ordering the identities of objects and subjects. In their landmark book, “*Hegemony and the Socialist Strategy*” Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001 [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1985]) are clear that social reality exists only through the set of meanings people ascribe to it, and that those meanings are historically, culturally and socially specific. In other words, “the world” is “discursive”, because it has to be first conceptualised and thought of, to

become a social reality. "Society and social agents lack any essence, and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 98).

However, we should note that such conceptualization of social reality can be interpreted as "dematerialising" people's existence. This is not so, however, as Mouffe and Laclau do not deny the actuality of material reality, but rather insist that there is no "extra-discursive" route to understand it (2001, 107-8). Material objects do exist, but it is only through discourse (i.e. systems of meanings) that we are able to comprehend them, name them, categorise them, understand them (cf. Hall 1992; Haraway 1997; Saukko 2003). Indeed, one of the major contribution of Mouffe and Laclau to the study of discourse is their suggestion that material reality, as well as the linguistic domain, demands consideration (2001). As Howarth (2000, 101-2) puts it:

[discourse] theory captures the idea that all objects and actions are meaningful, and that their meaning is conferred by particular systems of significant differences [and] each of these discursive structures is a social and political construction, which establishes a system of relations between different objects and practices, while providing 'subject positions' with which social agents can identify.

I have been inspired by structuralist theorists in seeing difference as a key element to the consideration of language (e.g. de Saussure). However, such theorists go beyond structuralism since, for them, discourse as a system is conceptualized as a relational configuration of "floating signifiers", and thus DT is particularly fit to study contingent and hegemonic relations of power in their ever changing formations (Sutherland 2005).

In the next paragraphs I will introduce concepts of "dislocation" and "social antagonism", and by operationalizing them on the example of the post-1989 Poland, I will show why DT may be particularly fit for the purpose of studying Polish discourses of the nation and homosexuality. I also make use of these concepts in the Chapter 6 when analyzing state discourses. Dislocation occurs when one or more events/accurrences destabilize the present regime. In

consequence, there-articulation of the existing 'floating signifiers' must follow to fit the new discursive order. As such there is an emerging promise for the previously dislocated identities to be re-rooted in the emerging space of the sociality (Torfing 1999, 195). In this sense, "1989", as a symbolic representation of the series of changes, is without doubt its major example. Social, cultural, and economic conditions of living have changed for people in Poland, as did rules and mechanism of the political game, centres and holders of (political, economic, and social) power(s). 1989 conceived as *dislocation* is possible because the nation is more an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) rather than any remotely homogenous group; also because a state is to be understood as a set of practices or "ensemble of practices" (Finlayson and Martin 2006, 155), rather than a "thing".

"Poland" thus denotes a set of practices of people relating to each other in a given group and circumstances. How these relations are (per)formed after 1989 (and later after 2004 - the year Poland joined the EU) cannot be predicted on the basis of traditional indicators of national bonding/binding ("Polishness" as reconstructed in Chapter 5).

One of the outcomes of dislocation is *social antagonism*, which is defined by Mouffe and Laclau as:

the 'experience' of the limit of the social. Strictly speaking, antagonisms are not *internal* but *external* to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter's impossibility of fully constituting itself. [And then] the limit of the social must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence. Society never manages fully to be society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 125–7).

Social antagonism occurs because sociality (i.e. discursively created identities of subjects) is lacking what is expelled and wasted, hence foreclosing the possibility of "fullness". Social agents are unable to attain their "whole identities", as there is, accordingly, always a remainder, a bit of "waste" left behind; The Other, which must become an enemy. For it reminds the Self of its incompleteness, it is the one

to be blamed for the subject's own "failure" in identification (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 125). And since the deadlock is experienced by both sides, "(...) the task of the discourse analyst is to describe the ways in which the identities of agents are blocked, and to chart the different means by which these obstacles are constructed in antagonistic terms by social agents" (Howarth 2000, 105). In this sense identities and antagonisms show the limits of a "social" (national), its instability and vulnerability.

To summarise, I want to build on the words of Claire Sutherland (2005), and highlight again why it is useful to draw on DT as an effective way to study discourses of nation and homosexuality. Firstly we should note that study of discourse unpacks the discourses as constructed social phenomena, so undoing national discourses as invented and performative. Secondly, discursive analysis shows the process of constructing, resiting, and subverting the creation of meanings and social positionalities, thus is suited for the study of national articulations of the Self and the Other (Sutherland 2005), and I would add rearticulations of sexual identifications as well.

## **2.2 Identities and identifications**

It was only in the 1960s, and especially in the work of psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson, that "identity" first appeared in the academic arena (Poole 1999, 44). In anthropology, the first wave of interest came in the 1970s (Lewellen 2003, 159), and a decade later the social sciences took the category of "identity" fully on-board as an object of analysis (Satterwhite 2003). Since the 1980s, identity became more and more popular topic, e.g. academics working on nationalism and sexuality have observed that it is almost impossible to write in these areas of scholarship them without reference to the concept of identity (Weeks 1990; Blasius 1994; Poole 1999).

According to Richard Jenkins (R. Jenkins 1996, 4), the etymological roots and family group for the word *identity* points towards two seemingly counter-effective elements: sameness, and difference. Many competing definitions of identity can be tracked down to the manifold processes happening on the

borderline of these two elements. As Richard Mole writes, "at its simplest, identity seeks to convey who we are or are perceived to be and the way we, as individuals or groups, locate ourselves and others in the social world" (Mole 2007, 3). "Identity" derives from relations between ideas about sameness and difference and is consequently a matter of becoming, rather than a stable acquisition (Jenkins 1996; Weeks 1990, 88). This infuses the notion of identity with the idea of temporality, fluidity and processuality. Here, "identity" is redefined as a process (verb), rather than a thing (noun). Finally, identity provides a set of rules for moral and ethical conduct, establishing a prescribed life-path (Poole 1999, 70).

Sasha Roseneil and Julie Seymour in the opening essay for the edited volume *"Practising Identities"* (Roseneil and Seymour 1999, 3) write that

[t]here are two main strands within this recent theorizing of identity: a social theory, and a poststructuralist cultural theory strand. (...) [The first one] offers an historicized narrative of the development of identity, which is conceptualised as self-identity, the individual's conscious sense of self. (...) [The latter] highlights the importance of attention to power in the construction of identity through difference.

My own interests tend towards the second strand. However, it should be noted that this strand has its limitations. I remain somewhat "uneasy" about the question of agency and the almost total dis-empowerment of the individual and small minority groups, that is represented in the work of many cultural theorists (Roseneil and Seymour 1999a, 4) and in my analytical Chapters 6-8 I will attain to some possibilities of subversive and wilful agency of lesbian and gay people in Poland, attaining to more diversified a picture of social agency. The "poststructuralist cultural theory" is focused on the discursive formations and social positions available to social subjects (Roseneil and Seymour 1999a, 4). Among many, Richard Jenkins (1996) insists that the individual and collective dimensions of identity should be seen as two sides of the same process; they cannot exist without, or separately from, one another (1996, 19-20). What is implied here takes us into the heart of the discussion over the structure of identity: whether it is a finished "thing" or rather a constant process of "identification"

(Jenkins 1996, 4-5). Jenkins is interested in understanding motifs and factors influencing our choices as individuals in the social world, i.e. processes of identification. This shift is crucial for my purposes, as it opens up a space for understanding relations between the discourses of nation and homosexuality as ongoing processes that take different shapes and forms at various times, according to changing needs, situations and responses. It has also a more personal meaning, helping me to understand and cope with my own everyday life.

The tension between identity and identification may signal an ambivalence underlying the very existence of "identities". As Jeffrey Weeks (1990) points out, identities are founded on certain values and ideologies which concern different spheres of our lives and underpin different roles and priorities, a dynamic often leading to a "clash of identities" (Weeks 1990, 89; Poole 1999, 64). The conflict is not only internal (between the different identities one embraces) but is also external (between people embodying excluding/exclusive identities) (Weeks 1990, 90). However, disagreement can lead to social change. The outcome and reaction to change depends, in turn, on the broader ideological positions one occupies.

The work of Jonathan Friedman (1994) tells us that modernism is very much about struggling to acquire a sense of "true self" in forms of experience, knowledge, or e.g. entertainment. The consequence, as Friedman implies, is that we are no longer (were we ever?!) dealing with a process where time moves from "tradition" to "modernity" (or it was conceptualised so), but is multi-vectored, happening in both directions, independently, as well as happening in tight correlation and across different markers of time (Friedman 1994, 90-93). Nestor Canclini (1995) builds on Friedman's work in his anthropological work in Mexico. Canclini proposed the term "hybrid identities" to describe the counter-positioned strategies of identification, reactionism and misidentification. He developed his point with reference to the Mexican cultural practices in the era of globalisation. He found that processes of globalisation brought not only the modernisation of society (development of infrastructure, widening access to various sources, etc.), but also re-traditionalisation (e.g. revival of traditional



customs). He observed that although current global processes bring some positive changes, they also require "pay-back" in the form of acceptance of new social and cultural organisation, and a re-definition of social bonds, practices and perspectives (reactionism).

This is, however, a price people may not be prepared to accept in a straightforward way. Since social and cultural re-configuration is involved, the first attempt is to step back and protect it by means of "getting back to our roots", i.e. (re-)traditionalisation. In Poland, for example, the "euroscepticism" (rejection of EU/European values in favour of "traditional Polish" ones) most popular among the elderly population, may serve as an example. That is why Canclini writes that although tradition and modernity oppose and challenge each other, they are also complementary. This tension arising at the crossroads of supposedly contradictory, yet also harmonious positions shapes what he termed "hybrid identity" (1995). The vision of identities as hybrid, that is positioned in the "cross-fire" of multi-vectorial interest positions, especially in the context of modernisation - traditionalisation, is useful in the Polish context. It helps to make sense of various, potentially contradictory discourses that developed over the last twenty years, discourses that are often interchangeably used by the social or political actors of diverse standpoints. It is also worth noting that the concept of hybridity gained much popularity in post-colonial studies, to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

To support the claim for hybridity and also to better understand how power is inscribed in the notion of identity, I refer to the work of Ross Poole. This Australian philosopher suggested that in order to understand any individual, we must realise that the very notion of "personhood" is a type of identity, no more important or primordial than any other (Poole 1999, 53). Drawing on the work of Marcel Mauss and conceptions of ancient Roman philosophy and law, Poole insists that becoming a person is a form of acculturation. Therefore "personhood" may be seen as a form of available cultural identification (like national identity), supported by legal jurisdictions (Poole 1999, 54). Poole underlines the compulsory character of identification with *persona*, as one is forced (by the fact

of being born into a particular culture) to embody cultural core rules and norms (see also Butler 1993; 2006a). However, as personhood does not provide the narrative that could lead the individual through the various roles with which one engages in the course of one's life, other factors come into play when finding one's own place (difference) in the social world (sameness). These factors may be gender, sexuality, race, but also friendships and other forms of belonging (Poole 1999, 55).

Another important developments in the study of "identity"/"identifications" comes with approaches often called "post-modern". But to start any discussion on post-modernism it is necessary to acknowledge, as Hollinger (1994) does, that it is impossible to identify any one postmodern point of view, an assertion that could be said to be post-modern in itself. There is a vast amount of postmodern literature, and literature on postmodernism, but what may be most useful for the study of identity is the diagnosis of social and cultural relations provided by Gecas and Burke (1995) (themselves elaborating on various other authors). They point towards the claim that in what they call "postmodern societies" real is blurred with imaginary, and possibilities of agency and authenticity of the self are questioned. Thus, "the postmodern self is characterised as decentred, relational, contingent, illusory, and lacking any core or essence" (Gecas and Burke 1995, 57). Following on from this, an interesting insight about *rationality* is found in the work of Homi Bhabha.

In an interview given in 1990 entitled "*The Third Space*" (1990a), Bhabha brings to our attention difference and its consequences for political action. Discussing several of his previous texts, he points out that the "relativism" and "universalism" of identities are part of the same process of identification (Bhabha 1990, 209), and that they open the space for considering "cultural difference" and "cultural diversity" as subjects of functional "cultural translation" (1990, 209-210). "Translation", though, is not used in its popular linguistic meaning, but as a trope, motif, and activity of displacement enabling it to relate functions and institutions in one culture to the institutions in other cultures. And here is the moment where the role of identities is not to be underestimated. From a post-modern perspective,

Bhabha denies identity essentialism on the grounds of the possible translation of cultural factors (dis-placement in/across culture), which for him proves the point that there is no original self, found *a priori* to cultural existence (1990, 211). In other words, the always unfinished (never entirely possible) project of the "Original" is nothing more than a cultural patchwork, one whose composition is only possible thanks to the existence of various un-classified identities – those hybrid elements composing "individuals". Identities, on the other hand, open the "third space" enabling different positions (one may occupy in their social life) to emerge. Processing, doing, undoing, and redoing of the "Original" displaces histories, and sets up new structures, initiatives, and authorities (1990, 216), simply because of its constant repetition and resistance to stagnation. Such a stance on identities and their influence on cultures enables Bhabha to reinvent the very possibility of social action. As he writes:

I prefer to see it [fragmentation of identity] as recognition of the importance of the alienation of the self in the construction of forms of solidarity. It is only by losing the sovereignty of the self that you can gain the freedom of a politics that is open to the non-assimilationist claims of cultural difference. The crucial feature of this new awareness is that it doesn't need to totalise in order to legitimate political action or cultural practice (Bhabha 1990, 213).

Bhabha shows how an essentialist notion of "I/Us" (the essentialist "sovereignty of the self") is not a necessary precondition for the collective action or a group formation (identity-based politics, like "LGBT"). Going beyond essentialist understanding of "identity" seems a useful step if one tries to understand the relationship between the discourses of nation and homosexual, (which are popularly perceived as "essentially exclusive"). Adopting perspectives that develop along the lines of Bhabha's thinking will help me to understand cultural practices on the crossroads of nationhood and homosexuality that otherwise could be overlooked as not neatly fitting into the "totalised and supposedly fixed order" of "identities". I also believe this is helpful gateway to think through tensions between individual and group belonging, and a minority groups' possibility of agency.

## 2.3 Power and knowledge

One of the major issues that I have highlighted in the previous chapter and the earlier sections is the relationship between the production of knowledge and the power of knowledge. Through the course of his life, Michel Foucault developed a critical theory of science, which he understood as a tool for managing and controlling society. The oppressive nature of scientific knowledge, however, is not perceived primarily in terms of a negation or denial. Rather, it is the proliferation and multiplication of "truth(s)" about densely subjugated and categorised elements of any social system. "Truth" then becomes the tool and mechanism of maintaining and ordering social cohesion (Foucault 1980; 1998; 2000). Foucault developed the compound "power/knowledge" as a productive and fertile site of social hegemonies. He understands knowledge as "oppressive", because it is used for the purpose of embodying new, and sustaining already existing, power divisions and inequalities. As he says in the "*Prison Talk*" (1980) interview:

Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power; this is just a way of reviving humanism in a utopian guise. It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power (Foucault 1980, 52).

Knowledge becomes identified as power: those who possess the knowledge, possess the power of implementation and imposition of their own perspectives – ruling and classifying things according to individual perspective, even though the claim of science is to be "objective" and "neutral".

The uniqueness of Foucault's philosophy, in comparison with previous scholarship on power, mostly within the Marxist tradition (Gramsci 1988; Althusser 1971; Althusser 1984), lies in the new perspectives he offered to already well-analysed social, cultural and philosophical dynamics. In the case of power, it is not only the recognition of its repressive and negative character, but the acknowledgment and analysis of its productive mechanisms. Foucault introduced

two problems into this field of study: power as the relationship between agents, not as the state of things; and the horizontal vector of this activity (Mills 2003).

The first stresses the importance of the shifting circumstances to which reacting agents need to accommodate, hence creating new correlations of bonds between them, and thus modifying the process of power. The second highlights the fact that power is happening not only along the vertical, top-down imposition line, but is also spread horizontally between otherwise "equal" agents. This means that power may not only be understood as set in-place, but also as the process of adaptation and negotiation of this setting. The most important consequence of this viewpoint is the recognition of flexibility and productive capacities of power. It may produce subjects, objects, and knowledge about them, which serves to maintain the relationship of power. The most visible link between power and knowledge is observable in the relation between the majority and minority. Imbalanced power hierarchies lead both sides to greater activity in the field of knowledge production. As Sarah Mills states in her book about Foucault:

For Foucault, it is more accurate to use his newly formed compound 'power/knowledge' to emphasise the way that these two elements depend on one another. Thus, where there are imbalances of power relations between groups of people or between institutions/states, there will be a production of knowledge. Because of the institutionalised imbalance in power relations between men and women in Western countries, Foucault would argue, information is produced about women (...). There are many books about Black people, but not about Whites. (...) In a complex process, this production of knowledge about economically disadvantaged people plays a significant role in maintaining them in this position (Mills 2003, 69).

A Foucauldian understanding of knowledge as power may be helpful in my research in two ways. The first concerns the relationship between the subjects and objects of the research, and will help me in understanding why, for example, Polish LGBT organisations choose specific methods in achieving their goals. If we accept a Foucauldian perspective, then we see how LGBT groups create and promote their "own" knowledge about themselves (e.g. reclaiming history to "uncover" "great homosexual people"), empowering their own status as social

minority. The second way concerns the epistemological perspective that constitutes my own writing. As Sarah Mills states, the production of knowledge is strongly connected to the specific positions one occupies in the manifold network of social locations and power privileges/disadvantages. Throughout the whole of this thesis, I try to reflect on my own work as already positioned in those networks, and how it may then be seen as a tool of e.g. oppression. However, it offers also the space to think about the possibilities of resistance that such research may offer.

Therefore I want to suggest another dimension of this thesis, in which I hope to engage (although to a lesser extent than with my core research questions) with the problem of epistemic hegemony in the domain of knowledge production (Academe). In thinking through this issue, I am particularly keen on considering the role of the geography and the regional divisions of “Europe” that come to shape what is perceived as “proper knowledge”. How do specific cultural and national customs, habits, and traditions shape and lay the ground for the recognition of what is, and what not, “knowledge”? This stems, again, from my personal experiences of being schooled into one cultural/academic tradition (of Poland), and then having to confront the very different British academic system. But I also believe that such reflection is necessary for any more profound and critical engagement with the existing literature. As Binnie (2004) writes, we will not be able fully to comprehend the crucial similarities and differences concerning sexuality if scholarship does not pay more attention to geographical differences, and other issues of uneasy processes of globalisation. Additionally, many years before, Clifford and Marcus pointed towards the academic writing “determination” in ethnography (but it can easily be extended to any other discipline):

Ethnographic writing is determined in at least six ways: (1) contextually (it draws from and creates meaningful social milieux); (2) rhetorically (it uses and is used by expressive conventions); (3) institutionally (one writes within, and against, specific traditions, disciplines, audiences); (4) generically (an ethnography is usually distinguishable from a novel or a travel account); (5) politically (the authority to present cultural realities is

uniquely shared and at times contested); (6) historically (all the above conventions and constraints are changing). These determinations govern the inscription of coherent ethno- graphic fictions (Clifford and Marcus 1986, 6).

Lastly in this section of the Chapter 2, I want to write about Foucault and subjectification. Throughout his prolific work, one of the most developed visions of the self can be found in *"The History of Sexuality"*, vol. 2 *"The Use of Pleasure"* (1992). In brief, self (personal identity) for Foucault is the way of making and working on oneself. In the chapter *"Morality and Practice of the Self"* Foucault distinguishes two basic pillars that morality is composed of. These are "codes of behaviour" and "forms of subjectification", although growing in relative independence from each other, yet cooperating and relating to each other (1992, 29). The first being rules of how to behave, which are codified and merged into a system of jurisdiction and then law enforcement (1992, 30). This is a process observed during late Christianity. Contrary, with very few exceptions, such a process of codification was not present during the preceding period of Antiquity in Greece, where, according to Foucault, forms of direct subjection were more important. These, on the other hand, are ways of relating and perceiving one's own self, what feelings one has, what actions one undertakes in consequence, and so on. (1992, 30-31). Codes of behaviour and forms of subjectification are not contradictory due to the fact that both are expressions of a "moral code/morality", which Foucault defines as:

(...) set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as family (...), educational institutions, churches, and so forth. They may be set out as an explicit and coherent doctrine, but also] form a complex interplay of elements that counterbalance and correct one another, and cancel each other out on certain points, thus providing for compromises and loopholes (1992, 25).

The operationalisation is three-fold and includes the "rule of conduct" (i.e. codes), conduct measured by/against this rule, and finally, instructions of how to conduct oneself (that is the way person ought to formulate themselves as the

"ethical subject"). The last mode could be seen as the way self relates to the outer world, constituting oneself as an individual. This process involves four elements: the recognition of the ethical substance, the types of subjection, the forms of elaboration of the self, and the moral teleology.

The first component relates to what is being worked on. For example, sexual feelings experienced by lesbians and gay men, or more specific still, a particular element of those feelings such as intensity or frequency. The second is the way a person relates to the rules and to what/whom one feels obliged to follow those rules. For example these could be health system representatives indicating/prescribing what is good/bad for individual health, or religious gurus, overall: authorities. The third constituent is the "ethical work that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour" (Foucault 1992, 27). It could be done through participation in, for example, support groups, or through use of counselling services. The fourth and the last element is the placement of all of these actions already undertaken in a wider network of morality, as all actions are expected to comply with established ethical rules. Even more, this entails stretching and overcoming particularity and producing "a certain mode of being, a mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject" (1992, 28).

Foucault's vision of the self as a process of working on oneself to comply with ethical rules, the process he terms "forms of subjection", means that we can establish and produce ourselves as individuals, and possess an identity. And since there are multiple moral codes that may neutralise themselves leaving loopholes, there is potentially an unlimited number of creations a person can work out for themselves. Therefore, since all these are actions happening constantly, it may be more useful to consider them as the *processes of identification* rather than *fixed identities*. By discussing Michel Foucault, I hope to provide another way of understanding how power is internalised, shaping in consequence relations between subjects. Therefore, in analysing discourses of identity, identification and dis-identification, relations between the discourses of nation and homosexuality



may be problematised in multiple ways, as oppressive, revolting, or reliant, painting an even more complex and interesting picture. Additionally, Foucault's work on subjectification may be helpful in shedding more light on practices of lesbian and gay people in the new (neoliberal) cultural context of the "new Poland", as analysed in Chapter 8.

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In this chapter, I have discussed the choice of materials and sources for my later analysis, and elaborated on various theoretical traditions, mapping out the field(s) in which this research is rooted. In the previous chapter, I have reflected on feminist works on "situated knowledge" and showed why it is important (for me) to be reflexive about my place and influence in the research process. This thread was further theorised in my discussion on power and knowledge and Michel Foucault's philosophy. Since I have chosen case studies and discourse analysis as the major methodological forms of inquiry, I have also contextualised my understanding of "discourse" and "case", and also indicated various approaches to the study of "identity"/"identification" that I find inspiring.

## ***Chapter 3***

### ***Theorising nationhood***

This chapter elaborates conceptually on nationhood, nation and national identifications, and the nation-state. Its main purpose is to further elaborate the conceptual framework of this thesis. As such, it is not intended as a comprehensive field overview – in itself almost an impossible task, considering the extent of the available literature. Rather, it presents a box of conceptual tools that will be used or referred to further in the thesis. It is also intended that the reader shall not find many references to the Polish context here, for that is introduced in the Chapter 5. To begin with, rather than writing about already very well established “canonical” literature from the 1970s and 1980s (Nairn 1977; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; A. D. Smith 1986; A. D. Smith 1991; Hobsbawm 1992; Breuilly 1993), I will focus my attention on newer threads that emerged during the 1990s and 2000s. However, a brief summary of “canonical” nationalism studies will be provided, followed by some attention to the work of Benedict Anderson. Having done this, I will proceed to shape my framework by considering relations between globalisation, nationalism, and post-colonialism. Special attention will be given to concepts of narration and temporality, as key performative aspects of national identifications.

A good description of early scholarship in the field was given by Anthony Smith (2008), an important theorist working in this area. He writes that these works constructed a “grand theory” of nationalism, wondering about its origins and motives. Preoccupied with the question of origins, the work is historical and sociological/political. It is not unusual for scholars to take different positions relating to the historical origins of nationalism. Typically these positions range from what is referred to as “primordialism” or “perennialism”, through “ethno-symbolism”, to “modernism” and “post-modernism” (Spencer and Wollman 2002, 27). Primordialists would claim the deep roots of the nation in the far past, and see the national as emerging from organic social organization. In the contemporary era, such an uncompromising view tends to be the expression of

(some) nationalist movements, rather than of academics working.. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Ernst Renan (1990; [1882]) suggested that nationalism resembled religious forms of belief. Later, in the first half of the twentieth century, writers like Hans Kohn (1944) related nation to the state of mind; they saw the nation as a type of consciousness, conceiving of it as an intellectual phenomena. More contemporary writers concerned with nation building, who see significance in the role of the past and ethnic bonding, are often referred to as “ethno-symbolists”. In the words of the most prominent representative of this school, Adam Smith,

[f]or ethno-symbolists, what gives nationalism its power are the myths, memories, traditions and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular *living past* has been and can be rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias (A. D. Smith 1999, 9).

Among many theoretical approaches to the study of nations and nationalisms, those who link national origins with modernism and modernization are among the most numerous. Benedict Anderson (1991), on the other hand, stresses the role of culture as the originating source of nationalism. Economic transformations of the industrial age are the crucial factors in the formation of nations for Ernest Gellner (1982) and Eric Hobsbawm (1992). Interestingly, Gellner’s position on the origins of nations and nationalisms develops in striking opposition to ethno-symbolist genealogy. Rather than seeing nationalism as a product of nations and nationalists, he argues to the contrary:

Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, [as a] political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures; that is reality (Gellner 1983, 48-49).

A similar point is argued by Elie Kedourie (1993), who was also one of the most prominent critics of nationalism as distorted ideology/doctrine. There is also a distinct stress put on the role of the state as an actor (and/or destination) in the national/ist discourses (Breuilly 1993).

To overall summarise the modernist studies of the nation and nationalism,

one finds Australian philosopher Ross Poole (1999) work, well placed here. Poole does not propose his own model, but extracts three most important elements that seem to pervade across all “modernists”. First, he highlights the importance of the development of the market from rural-based to urban-centred, followed by the shift from the agrarian to industrial organisation of social relations. Second, these processes coincided with the growth of the state, the development of administration, and the exclusive appropriation of power. The third element is the development of vernacular languages mixed with the spread of printing, leading to the creation of a new public sphere and spaces of social interaction (Poole 1999, 146).

These three elements bear rather functionalist notions of nationalism and national identities. Social and market transformations stripped local communities of the sense of security created in direct communication, dismantling those communities and inventing new collective forms of organisation. National identity was the “social glue” that could hold them together (Spencer and Wollman 2002). Additionally, the ongoing power conflicts on the political scene forced states, their apparatuses, and elites to seek new solutions to persisting problems, as well as new modes of self-legitimation. And again, nationalism paved the way for the nation-state. Finally, the spread of mass production (and especially the vernacular press) helped people to imagine themselves as a new, whole category: the nation.

On a more critical note, one should note that these “canonical” works pay less attention to ongoing processes of sustaining nation, treating it more as already-existing rather than “always in-becoming”. Modern nations, thus, were seen as a more or less uniform collective bodies, and national movements were perceived as striving for political entity: a state, so that nation as state is congealed into the nation-state in modern politics. It can also be observed that nationalism studies of the 1960s until the late 1980s reflected similar approach in understanding (national) identities as most of the identity studies literature of that time (see Chapter 2). For example, the formation of national identities through expulsion and negation of the Otherness, establishing what one is through

constraining what one is not (Parker et al. 1992, 5). Others were always identified as other nations, other ethnic groups, other political entities or states: “radical others”. It could also be said that the formation of national identity and nationhood happens almost exclusively through some sort of a conflict with the Other. Often the conflict is simplified as war, a hostile neighbour situation, or ethnic or religious slaughter. Eric Hobsbawm (1992) recognised that the “love of one’s own nation” far too often led to the hate of other nations; that national identity, especially when intertwined with ethnicity and the dialectical same/other dynamic, had too often proved to lead to aggression and war (the “age of extremes”). Furthermore, as Fox and Miller-Idriss suggest (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008a; 2008b), the “canonical” body of work is predominantly focused on elites and their struggles for power. Writings almost exclusively focus on nationalism as a top-down political (and eventually economic) ideology. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008a, 537) rightfully claim that “people” in this scholarship, are almost exclusively the object of nationalist ideology, directed and influenced by elites, and almost never subjects or active perpetrators of nationhood. It is this lack of “ordinary people” in the nationhood scholarship, where Fox and Miller-Idriss locate their interests, calling it “everyday nationhood”. Finally, as Michael Billig observed in his influential book *Banal Nationalism* (1995), the “canonical” study of nationalism pays much attention to the spectacular arena of nationalism: holidays and commemorations, manifestations, wars and battles. His book then, by looking at the neglected point of “banality” and ordinary everyday life, analyses the ways in which national identities and nationalisms function from the opposite angle.

A significant book leading the way for the shift from scholarly grand narratives of national origins to small-scale studies of the particularisms of ordinary nationalism that proliferated in the 1990s, was *Imagined Communities* (1991) by Benedict Anderson. Although his pioneering study was first published in 1983, it was a decade later when Anderson’s insights were fully taken on board in nationalism studies. The focus of his book on discursive formations of national belonging and shifts in the economic organisation of Europe, the growing

importance of vernacular languages, and the creation of “national imaginary” sets Anderson apart from the aforementioned nationalism studies. It can be said that Anderson steps down from the macro to meso level, by paying more attention to the means, channels, tools and ways of dispersing national ideology that forced the creation of national identities and a sense of nationhood.

Anderson’s idea of a nation as an “imagined community” became so popular that it may seem to be too worn out to be meaningful. I would suggest that it is not necessarily so. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991) “[he paves] the way for the study of national identity as subjective consciousness and perception with a focus on discourse, representations and social practices (...)” (Mole 2007, 12). For Anderson, the rise of nationalism was a reaction to the insecurity that followed the Enlightenment’s stress on “new” rationality, which occurred alongside the emergence of capitalism, with particular focus on vernacular print languages. The idea of an “imagined community” stemmed from the fact that although people will never have a chance to meet all other fellow nationals in reality, in their minds they have an image and sense (identity?) of such a huge community. The process of creating such an imaginarium began during the Reformation and the collapse of Catholicism as the dominant Christian belief, which led to the diminishing role of Latin to the benefit of vernacular languages, all reinforced by the invention and spread of printing. It was “print-capitalism” and education (or work on diminishing illiteracy) done by elites (intelligentsia, political leaders) that ultimately enabled people to imagine themselves as a whole, revolutionising communication and the spread of ideas (1991). The unifying role of education seems to be straightforward through the imposition of a canon and standardised syllabus. The role of print would be to overcome locality and introduce a pan-regional identity, so that those who will never establish personal contact could still be able to imagine themselves as “the same”.

By helping the spread of vernacular languages, and at the same time reducing regional dialects to one national standard, print established an arena for the emergence of a new sensitivity to sameness and difference, a new identity

developed on a national level. Anderson also gives significant attention to the political dimension of national identities, and goes so far as to say that emerging nationalism coincided with the establishment of the idea of state sovereignty, enabling the idea of nation-state, or "imagined political community" (Anderson 1991, 6). He argues that "[w]hat in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity" (Anderson 1991 [1983], 46).

Although Anderson's account is about the formation of a national sense of belonging (macro), he also searches for more particular rooting and practices that enabled it (meso level). He still, however, sees elites as crucial to the deployment of nationalism and the idea of nationhood. As Spencer and Wollman observe, Anderson underplays the role of "spontaneous popular nationalisms" by paying them significantly less attention compared with elite-driven ones (2002, 39-40). Another important critique concerns Anderson's Eurocentrism. Although he does explore nationalisms in post-colonial countries, his perspective seems to privilege the European model. As Ania Loomba writes, for Anderson "(...) anti-colonial nationalism is itself made possible and shaped by European political and intellectual history. It is a 'derivative discourse', a Calibanistic model of revolt which is dependent upon the coloniser's gift of language/ideas" (Loomba 1998, 189).

Against "classical" theoretical framing of nationhood, during the 1990s and early 2000s, there grew a more distinctive body of literature on nationalism. It engages with nationhood on the micro level, with the practices of "real people", where the idea of nation and reality of national identification and practices takes place (Patton and Sánchez-Eppler 2000, 10). As suggested, understanding of nationhood and nationalism exists in relationship to scholarship on identity. The decade of 1990s witnessed the shift in conceptualisations of identity, opening and proposing more flexible operationalizations ("identification"), stressing processuality and relationality of identifications, rather than seeing identity as a more or less stable acquisition. Similarly, the conceptualisations of national

identity began to change. More attention began to be given to how nations are performed and enacted, how nationhood “happens” and is talked, thought and acted upon. So the new approach is very much a shift from the “spectacular” to “banal” nationalism, and a search for “people” (Billig 1995; Thompson 2001; Antonsich 2009) and everyday nationhood (Eriksen 1993; Herzfeld 1997; Palmer 1998; Lankauskas 2002; Fox 2006; Edensor 2006; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008a). A discursive analytical approach develops (Wodak et al. 1999; Thompson 2001; Mole 2007; Millar and Wilson 2007; Galasinska and Krzyżanowski 2009), and along with it, the idea of nation as narrative, with a strong temporal component, becomes popular (Bhabha 1990b; Brennan 1990; Pease 1992; L. Kramer 1997; Allan and Thompson 1999; Roberts 1999). Finally, body-politics, bodily representations, sexuality and engendered national practices and ideologies, imperialism and terrorism gather attention (Cohen 1996; Sharp 1996; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Yuval-Davis 1997; Mayer 1999; Pryke 1998; C. Stychin 2001; Gabilondo 2004; Puar 2007; Kuntsman and Miyake 2008; Butler 2009).

The shift in nationalism studies from spectacular events and national commemorations, and from the question of origins of nations towards micro level analyses of everyday practices and modes of reproduction of nationhood, has produced some of the most interesting works in recent years. Although with a wide scope of interests and methodologies, what all these works have in common, is an agreement that previous studies were much too focused on elites and their influence over “people”, the latter seemingly transparent: present yet somehow usually only as objects of national pedagogy, and hardly ever as active perpetrators of national self. Scholars also agree that more attention needs to be paid to the pathways of national reproduction – ways nations are performed, established, imagined, enacted, engendered, told, timed and measured, consumed, and “unnoticed”.

A significant position that helped in spreading micro level studies of national identifications and performances was Michael Billig’s *“Banal Nationalism”* (1995). The aim of his book was to extend the work on nationalism to include socio-psychological aspects of quotidian life that interlock the national,



the psychic, the social, and the cultural together. To do so, Billig introduces the term “banal nationalism”, which in his words:

[covers] the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life, as some observers have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated, of ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition (Billig 1995, 6).

As I will argue in the next sections, remembering and forgetting are two crucial elements at work in national constructions of identities and selfhood. They are crucial elements also for Billig, and he operationalizes them with the example of waved and un-waved flag. “Flagging”, i.e. marking daily realities with national signs, becomes one of the crucial theoretical figures of his argument (1995, esp. chapter 3). Further attention is given, for example, to sporting events and media representations (especially daily press), where the author traces the mundane, unnoticed, “forgotten” yet still deeply harboured, representations of national affinity. An interesting extension of Billig’s work is proposed by Catherine Palmer (1998) and Tim Edensor (2002; 2006).

Palmer (1998) recommends extending the array of platforms on which national everydayness is performed. The focus of her article is to introduce the body, food, and landscape as important arenas where identifications with nationhood are performed (1998). She provides a range of practices that are used to exemplify her claim that daily practices, understandings and habits of the body, food, and landscape, inform and are informed by a sense of national belonging. Although opening up some interesting paths of thinking about daily chores and nationhood, the article does not expand its rich empirical content onto more generalised arena of much needed theory-building. Edensor (2006) on the other hand, focuses his article on national time and institutional scheduling. His main argument is that daily rhythms’ of routine actions sustain the sense of national belonging. By looking at scheduling, institutional arrangements of time, collective synchronicities, and shared time-spaces, Edensor (2006) shows how daily organisation of social/cultural time is intrinsic to individual sense of national

belonging.

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Along these inspiring developments, also the macro level was reinvigorated thanks to the impact of post-colonial scholarship on nationalisms and its rejection of the predominant Eurocentrism of previous studies. Much stress is placed on the “coincidences” of the Enlightenment, Romanticism and colonialism, showing how the development of modern ideas of state, “Europe” and nation are intrinsic to the colonisation of “the rest of the world” (Young 1990; Said 1994; Guillaumin 1995; Stuart Hall et al. 1995; Chakrabarty 2007). Especially in the wake of Bhabha, this scholarship also introduced the idea of the “hybridity” of post-colonial realities and subjects. I make use of the post-colonial theories in trying to grasp some problems of the “post-communist transformation”. These approaches are derived from post-structuralist, postmodern, feminist and transnational perspectives, which also constitute the theoretical framework of my research. So far, I have presented a brief overview of nationalism studies. The following sections will be more problem-oriented, where I explore connections between nation, globalisation, and (post)colonialism, and nation, narration and time.

### **3.1 Nation, globalisation and post-colonial theories**

The issue of globalisation is unquestionably one the most often discussed buzzwords today, both in academia and outside. The number of books and articles written about it is enormous. The interest in the topic, built up from enthusiastic, through uncertain, to more reluctant and unconvinced voices. In relation to nations and nationalisms, the first voices heralded the “end of history” and an unavoidable dispersal of state-national boundaries (Antonsich 2009, 282). Violent ethnic and religious conflicts in the Balkans and elsewhere in world, all framed as national, toned down the optimistic attitudes, producing more nuanced analyses of globalisation (Darling-Wolf 2008). For example, authors like John Tomlinson (1999) or Arjun Appadurai (1996; 2001) weave more shaded and

masterfully textured tapestries of power relations on global and local, national and regional, levels. Power, for Appadurai, is dispersed and mediated in many directions, intermingled in chains of dependencies, a “disjunctive flow” that operates locally, but which has effects of global dimension (Appadurai 2001). Tomlinson shows how global cultural production is digested, translated, re-worked and changed on the local/national levels. He insists on the impossibility of a unidirectional (“global dominating local”) approach to understanding processes and relations of power, production, exchange, hegemony and resistance (Tomlinson 1999). This is very much a discussion about the possibility of agency, hegemony and resistance. Darling-Wolf condensed this dilemma in the following words:

Recognizing the role of local agency in negotiating global influence adds a new dimension – often (dis)missed by political economy scholars – to the understating of transcultural relationships. As local identities and hybrid cultural forms are fashioned in relationship – and even opposition – to the global through involvement with increasingly abstract and deterritorialized imagined communities (...), the global-local nexus becomes a site of simultaneous resistance and domination (Darling-Wolf 2008, 190).

I share the perspective of these later works on the issue of globalisation, which is necessary to reflect upon when writing about social and cultural changes in the Poland after 1989. Only by understanding the “global” will one be able to understand the shapes and incarnations of the “local” in Poland, which ultimately took form through the adoption of “global” Western neoliberal capitalism and liberal democratic regimes.

The issue of the global and the local is operationalized in post-colonial studies through the question about (respectively) the metropolis/centre and its relation of hegemonic subordination of the periphery/colony. The myth of a nation and the emergence of post-colonial struggles as national ones is an important thread of postcolonial scholarship. However, it also has to be noted that it is primarily preoccupied with the rise of nations during and after colonisation. Only more recently some authors, like Brennan (1990), Chatterjee (1995), and Chakrabarty (2007) began to show how European nations developed

during the 19th century in relation to colonial conquest. Thus Mishra and Hodge (1991) and Hulme's (1995) pledge for greater engagement of post-colonial academics with the changes in the metropolis – pointing out that the colonialism was not a one-way process and that both the “periphery” and the “centre” changed during the colonial encounter. This call was taken up recently by Hall and Rose (2006). They write:

we argue that empire was, in important ways, taken-for-granted as a natural aspect of Britain's place in the world and its history. No one doubted that Great Britain was an imperial nation state, part of an empire. J. R. Seeley famously argued that the British ‘seemed to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind’. (...) It is this ‘unconscious acceptance’, whether of the burdens or benefits of empire, that we are in part exploring in this volume (Hall and Rose 2006, 2).

Post-colonial, or post-colonial inspired works draw out attention to location - place, map and geography. Bill Ashcroft et al. (1995) state that “[p]lace and displacement are crucial features of post-colonial discourse”, and they further elaborate on (colonial) subjectivity conceived in relation to place. Since the “<place> in post-colonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment”, Ashcroft et al. argue that in the process of re-establishing the connection between (colonial) subject and (its) place through language, independent subjectivity can be conceived (1995, 391-2). Furthermore, as much as some postcolonial thinkers show how, for example, cartography, travel writing, and discourses of exploration and discovery, were used for colonial conquest (Carter 1989; Huggan 1989; Crosby 1995), the same discourses most often fail to critically address their own construction of the “Europe”/“metropolis”. Graham Huggan (1989) shows how the idea of the map was deconstructed and appropriated by many post-colonial writers. The map becomes a locus of productive transformations reflecting trans-national and diversified characteristics of post-colonial realities and discourses. Yet still, in all this productive and interesting work, I would suggest that the “European metropolitan centre” of colonial power is homogenised to “Western Europe”. “Europe” comes to mean primarily France and United Kingdom, sometimes Spain, Portugal, and

Netherlands, rarely Denmark. And although the reasons are obvious, since these were the main perpetrators of colonial imperialism, one still would expect that in the process of deconstruction of imperialist discourses done from the margins, more attention might be given to their own discursive practices and construction. Where are the boundaries of “Europe”? Through which modalities is “Europe” defined? Who belongs to “Europe”, who aspires to it, and who is in power to impose the dominant ideas about being or not, properly “European”? Although these are of course grand questions that reach well beyond the scope of this chapter and research, some reflection needs to be given to them. As I have written elsewhere (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011a), the formation of sexualities and sexual identities in Central and Eastern Europe remains in a tight relation to (and under the immense influence of) the contemporary “Western” and American hegemonic discourses in politics, economics and culture. Thus, without some understanding of how these function and what are the ongoing and shifting strategies of maintaining “Western” dominance, little can be understood about sexual politics in Poland.

Finally, another important contribution of post-colonial theories to recent scholarship on nationhood, which may potentially be useful in the Polish context, has to do with “mimicry”. As one of the fundamental categories of post-colonial analysis (commencing with the influential work of Franz Fanon *“Black Skin, White Mask”*) (2008), it inevitably evokes again the question of agency. If Anderson unintentionally denies agency to colonial subjects even in their national struggle for independence, other scholars are not as pessimistic (Chatterjee 1995; Murray 1997). Partha Chatterjee provides an interesting line of counter-argument by distinguishing two manifestations of nationalist forces. The first one, studied by most political science and nationalism studies scholars, connects national sentiment and the struggles built upon it, to the ultimate goal of political independence and the formation of a nation-state. Here, he agrees with Anderson that “political nationalism” in the “Third World” was largely taken up by metropolis-educated elites, who then ignited political independence and state-formation movements. However, if the first is a relation of “borrowing”, the

second dynamic relates to the specific cultural national movements themselves, which are characterised by their attempt to differentiate themselves from the colonial culture, and to assert, maintain and support autonomy (Chatterjee 1993, 4–8; 1995). What is principally important here is the question of how cultural and national in/difference is forced or attempted? The answer that is most convincing to me, is that given by some feminist scholars (as well as others), who suggest that it is gender and women's bodies that are (battle)fields of contention – markers of cultural difference (among others Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; McClintock 1995; Lutz, Phoenix, and Yuval-Davis 1995; Spivak 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997). If men were the bearers of economic and political agency, women were assigned to the sphere of culture and the role of tradition-keeping. For these reasons, the colonial mission of bringing “civilisation” to “barbaric” indigenous people was targeted in the first instance, at women; conversely, the eradication of degenerate “native” culture was to “advance” women's social position (Loomba 1998, 192). This inevitably was seen by nationalist movements as a form of invasion, and their own tactics to “protect” women in response were deployed. Unfortunately, these “protective” measures of national/indigenous culture mostly strengthened the patriarchal gender order. The veil worn by Muslim women, and the practice of Sati, burning widows with their dead husbands, serve as two examples (L. Ahmed 1992; Spivak 1995).

### **3.2 Nation, narration, and time**

Another important concept for my understanding of nationhood, is narration. If Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991) was the first one to examine nation and national identities as discursive practices, the idea of nation as a narrative strategy had most impact with the work of Homi Bhabha in his books *Nation and Narration* (1990b) and *The Location of Culture* (2004). Bhabha's focus is on a/the “people” – he analyses how unsettled this category is within national/ist discourses (and academic writings). He claims that although “masses” are constantly present in rhetorical invocations, at the same time, these masses remain merely passive recipients of the discourses deployed by colonisers or

nationalist elites. “People” are presented as the “body” of the nation, enacting and taking part in historical events, yet at the same time “[t]hey are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference: their claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification and discursive address” (Bhabha 2004, 208). And it is this crisis of signification that preoccupies Bhabha the most. The aim of his well-known essay *“DissemiNation: time, narrative and margins of the modern nation”* is thus to displace the linearity of “people”, show the ambivalence of the concept, and its performative and pedagogical underpinnings (2004, 201).

The tension between performative and pedagogical aspects of national narrative of the “people”, mark this category as liminal for this very narrative, opening space of ambiguity and in-between-ness. This place, then, is a site of productive reiteration of minority discourses, contested genealogies, “people” and representations (Bhabha 2004, 225). Let’s now examine Bhabha’s conceptual toolkit. Performative and pedagogical aspects of national narrative are summoned in the following way:

In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of writing the nation (2004, 209).

The space in-between, people as a priori historical entity, “a pedagogical object”, and people created in the performative “now”, “people-as-becoming” is what Bhabha terms “the liminality of the nation (...), margins of modernity, narrative temporalities of splitting, ambivalence and vacillation” (2004, 211). In another text, Bhabha refers to another well-know figure of nation as “a modern Janus” (Nairn 1977) – two-faced god, forward and backwards looking, here and there, and so are national narratives, evoking regression and progress, rational political aims and irrational and emotional discourses (Bhabha 1990a, 2). However, this duality is also what haunts the Nation, itself as a double.

This turns the familiar two-faced god into a figure of prodigious doubling that investigates the nation-space in the process of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are in medias res; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, certainly, in the act of 'composing' its powerful image (1990a, 3).

Ultimately, national narrative proves to be unstable and in a constant process of self-establishing. A Janus-faced nation signifies itself as "incomplete signification", an impossible to achieve project. As support, he mobilises Gellner's argument (1983) that nations are products of nationalisms, thus nation is a cumulative effect of selectively chosen and forced shreds of cultural memory, patches of habits and traditions, often inventions and creations (see also Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984). Bhabha also recalls Partha Chatterjee's argument about the impossibility of the nation becoming "full". Chatterjee (1986) argues that because any national self relies on its Other, complete elimination of the otherness would in fact "destroy" the nation. Hence the nation is always "partial" since its reliance on the Other, which it sees as the "threat" of its "fullness", not realising that its only thanks to the Other that the nation exists.

So it is here, in the national locus of "people" as the ultimate claim and limitation, in the nation as "incomplete signification", that Bhabha sees the possibility for subaltern voices and minority discourses to emerge, where negotiations of distances and meanings can happen. In one of the paragraphs of *"DissemiNation"* (2004, 217-226) he then exemplifies, with the help of Fanon and Kristeva, how black people and racial minorities, and women effectively use the national ambiguity of incomplete national signification (and identification and dis-identification). Thus, it is also a site where non-identitarian activism may arise, drawing on the ambiguity of dis/identifications and its messiness (Bhabha 1990). I find the ideas of nation as narration, performativity and ambivalence as appealing and useful in writing about processes and temporal spans of Central and Eastern European transformations. They all, although conceived in particular framework of post-colonial studies, seem universal enough to use them outside this particular framework. As these concepts focus on processes and negotiations rather than on fixed status quo, they are well suited for my research.



Narrating, as a process in itself and as a way of organising and sequencing of events, is ultimately about timing and temporal arrangement. Usually, it is done in a linear manner, past-present-future, inducing a sense of the accumulation of experiences, thus the advancement of knowledge – i.e. progress. However, temporalities of a nation are more complicated, where notions of time(s) are used in a variety of ways, the subject to reconfigurations and juxtapositions, involving memory, forgetting and recovery (Roberts 1999, 202). These uses of time in national narratives are of key importance, since the ability to impose one vision of past is to gather control over the future – time is ultimately a political trophy bringing concrete rewards. For example, the past is usually used in national narratives as a source of legitimacy for present national claims, although meanings and even chronology of events is not fixed (Roberts 1999, 201; Allan and Thompson 1999, 39). Thus the constant need for repetitious invocations to sustain and re-create the impression of stability of a past/history, in the face of its unfeasibility. Not surprisingly, education is so often at the heart of national agenda. Moreover, not only many past events and facts have different interpretations but indeed, the existence or not of such events or facts is called into question (e.g. Kurdish and Turkish perspectives on Turkish genocide of Kurds), sometimes being purposefully eradicated from public consciousness through carefully crafted practices in the process of constructing memory and the politics of forgetting.

The work of memory is an important aspect in the formations of national identifications (Connerton 1989; Renan 1990; Billig 1995; Goff 1996; Misztal 2003; Zerubavel 2004). Remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same process, both forging selective choice from the multiplicity of the past, in order to establish a coherent and stable historical narrative. Remembering and forgetting should not only be understood as a passive mode of expulsion or appropriation, but should be seen as active strategies of creation. For example, practicing traditions as a way of remembering a national past often does not recall actual past habits, but invented them as such. This argument is best illustrated in the work of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in *“The Invention of Tradition”*

(1984), where they examine how many traditions are artificially produced by propagators of nationalist ideology, but also by colonisers and occupants.

Cementing the dream of past in the unifying narration of the present is always accompanied by the opposite process of breaking other visions into smaller, thus less significant pieces, repressing some accounts and amplifying others, inscribing and erasing (Loomba 1998, 202). The struggle to gain applause and recognition of a certain version of history is not a peaceful process, as Homi Bhabha warns. For him, the act of forgetting is the beginning of the national narrative, which always incorporates the forced effort to forget, an “obligation to forget” (2004, 230). But this obligation to forget, this forgetting to remember, is less about any form of historical memory if at all. In fact, for Bhabha, it is a totalising act of forgetting the past that establishes the national “here & now”: the (de)functional work of memory of the past is about the present and future of the nation. It is a moment when and where the “people”, the body of a nation emerges, as a collective “we”. In other words, forgetting constructs a discourse of society, performing the unification of “national will” and totalising the “many” into the “One” – the nation (2004, 230). As Bhabha adds later: “[b]eing obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imaging the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification” (2004, 231). I will refer to some of these ideas later the Chapter 7.

The scraps, shreds, bits and pieces stitched together to create a national patchwork are a rather fragile and thin fabric, one that is under constant threat of being torn apart by Other. These Others perform their work on the past anew, reshaping and restructuring the frail fabric, at least, constantly questioning other “histories”. Thus, Allan and Thompson encourage an analysis of methods and symbols that are used to “ward off” counter-attempts at re/con/figuration (1999, 42). Before this can be done, however, I would like to ask some probing questions, which I hope will help to operationalize the theoretical approach established so far.

If one forgets to remember, or even is obliged to forget, the very first question we need to ask is: What is being forgotten? And what are we made to

forget? By whom? The signification of “what” and “who” is not to be underestimated, as it clears the path to understand the particular discursive formation of the nation and its power relations. What follows is then to ask who forgets what? How do different subjects of national pedagogy shape their group subjectivity by the choice of certain objects of national past and present? I will return to these question later in the Chapter 6 and 7.

At the same time, we also need to ask what is being remembered? Which events, persons, dates, “facts” are chosen as appropriate? What social and cultural modalities underpin those choices? How do gender, religious affiliation, education, sexuality, social aspirations, race, etc. intrinsically influence individual preferences, which then form wider groups that begin to compete in the public arena for recognition of their own narratives? In analysing the processes of remembering and forgetting anew (that is to underline the performative aspect of these two strategies), we should not, though, lose sight of the “present” and “future”, as non of the three temporal modalities exists in a vacuum of its won. More practical examples of how we may answer some of these questions of time and narration, in relation to national and homosexual discourses will be discussed later in the thesis, especially in Chapter 7.

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In this chapter I have introduced nationhood studies, and through selective focusing on issues like globalisation, temporality, narration, post-colonialism, or nation as an everyday performance. By doing so, I have laid down conceptual rudiments for the intellectual engagement in the forthcoming chapters. The next one will further engage with questions of nationhood, but in the particular context of homo/sexuality.

## ***Chapter 4***

### ***Nationhood and (homo)sexuality***

This chapter considers issues of nationhood (as introduced in the previous one) in relation to homo/sexuality. I offer a critical introduction to the current academic writings that focus on the relationship between nationhood and homo/sexuality, and show that there is a lack of work concerned with sexuality in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) context. I begin with an introduction of the gender/sexuality and nationalism literature, which sets out some of the main themes for further exploration. I then move on to mapping relations between nationhood and homosexuality by focusing on the geo-temporal dimensions of “modernity”, explore issues of “sexual nationalisms” and “homonationalism”, and propose my own conceptualisations where I feel the existing literature does not offer a relevant analysis of the CEE cultural context. I also discuss the link between geography and performativity, and homoeroticism and homosocial settings of nationhood. In critically engaging with these various bodies of work, the chapter introduces concepts and perspectives that I utilize later on in the thesis.

As highlighted before, whilst there is academic work focused on nationhood and academic work focused on sexuality, it is only relatively recently (from the 1990s) that the relationship between the two has been growingly considered. This newer focus has been mainly conducted by feminist (-inspired) scholars, with a significant lack of interest from within “mainstream” literature on nationalism (Pryke 1998, 530). More precisely, the interest is largely on gender and nationalism (among others: Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Chatterjee 1990; Lutz, Phoenix, and Yuval-Davis 1995; McClintock 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997; Mayer 1999; Tolz and Booth 2005; Keinz 2009), with questions of sexuality left rather marginal or evoked implicitly in the context of gender roles (reproductive heterosexuality). Moreover, the gender aspect is often conflated with women and their subordination to men, with significantly less attention paid to the formation of masculinities (Nagel 1998, 243), not to mention other dissident gender

positions. Also many of the main works from the field of sexuality studies demonstrate a lack of interest in issues of nationalism (Pryke 1998, 530). This has been changing, however, in the recent years, with the growing number of works debating “queer migration” (e.g. Cant 1996; Patton and Sánchez-Eppler 2000; Wesling 2008; Kuntsman 2009; A. R. Evans et al. 2011), “sexual nationalisms” (e.g. Petzen 2004; Kuntsman 2008; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Tauqir et al. 2011), “sexual citizenship” (e.g. D. Evans 1993; Elman 1996; Lauren Berlant 1997; Rahman 1998; Phelan 2001) or bridging queer and post-colonial studies (e.g. Harper et al. 1997; Grewal and Kaplan 2001; Hawley 2001a; Hawley 2001b; Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan 2002; Massad 2002; Holden and Ruppel 2003; Gopinath 2005; Spurlin 2006; Massad 2008; Leckey and Brooks 2010).

Whilst certain elements of national ideologies and identities are so obviously gendered, gender is hardly examined in “classical” literature on nationalism (Yuval-Davis 1997, 1). Tolz and Booth (2005) highlight this point with the example of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1991). By quoting several passages from this canonical text, they show how Anderson (unconsciously?) acknowledges gender and its role in the formation of national identities (e.g. through words like: camaraderie, fatherland, brotherhood, etc.), but fails to address this relationship openly and clearly.

A pioneering work in the area of gender and nationalism is that of Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias *“Woman - Nation - State”* (1989). In their opening chapter the editors set up the agenda for the study of intertwined relations between gender, race, ethnicity, statehood, and nationalism through five clusters (1989, 7). These denote the major, although not exclusive, ways in which women relate/are related to nationalist projects. Firstly, they note that women are framed as the biological reproducers of nations/ethnic communities. Examples of how this is performed range from the “encouraging” means of establishing child benefits in the post-war UK, through regulating the number of births in particular communities, to the physical extermination of other groups. Secondly, women are framed as not only biological reproducers of nations, but also as markers of their boundaries. Here examples of the prohibition of inter-racial marriages or the varying regulations concerning lineage are the most obvious ones. Thirdly,

women are seen as the transmitters of culture. Because of their “maternal duties” of bringing up children, women’s role of socialising young ones is inevitably that of acculturation and bridging the generational gap. Additionally, not only do women transmit cultural ideologies, they are used as symbolic signifiers and representations of the nations and ethnic communities. Across many cultures, women are used to symbolically represent nations (for example Britannia, Marianne, or Polonia). Finally, the editors note the role played by women in struggles for independence. Whilst women are deployed across a range of positions and duties, it remains that they are predominantly represented in nurturing roles where they are supporting and facilitating men (nurses, communication operators, etc.) (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, 7-10; see also Yuval-Davis 1997).

Another important contribution to our understanding of gender and nation comes from the work of Anne McClintock (1995). By focusing on imperialism she shows relations and dependencies between national, imperial, and gender, ideological projects to be finely nuanced. McClintock’s observation about the prominence of family discourse is important to note here. She writes:

The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as natural and familial - the “national family”, the global “family of nations”, the colony as a “family of black children ruled over by a white father” - depended in this way on the prior naturalising of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere (McClintock 1995, 358).

Finally, Cynthia Enloe’s work (1990) on gender in international relations opened up more space for considering masculinities in the working of national projects. It is also here where we observe the contribution of Joane Nagel (1998) to the topic. Noticing the significant lack of attention given to masculinities in discussions of gender and nation, she explores the dynamics that may remain hidden if we subsume “gender” only to “women” in our discussions of nationhood. She writes:

By definition, nationalism is political and closely linked to the state and its institutions. Like the military, most state institutions have been historically and remain dominated by men. It is therefore no surprise that the culture

and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism. Masculinity and nationalism articulate well with one another, and the modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern nationalism (Nagel 1998, 248-9).

Nagel is influenced by the work of George Mosse (1985), who also paid a great deal of attention to the workings of masculinity in his explorations of nationalism and sexuality.

In this context, I welcome the work of Andrew Parker et al. who open their collection of essays *"Nationalisms and Sexualities"* (1992, 1), by writing that "[w]henver the power of the nation is invoked (...) we are more likely than not to find it couched as a love of country: an eroticized nationalism" (see also Hartsock 1983). The authors acknowledge nationalism as one of the most powerful ideologies, and they also identify sexualities as equally powerful sites of discourse creation, circulation and exercise. These considerations – taken together with the general lack of literature on these subjects – provide the primary motivation for their book, which is also a tribute to the George L. Mosse's publication *"Nationalism and Sexuality"* (1985). If Mosse tends to impose a vision of nationalism and sexuality as (once constructed) more or less stable and monolithic, by making sexuality plural – sexualities – in the title of their book, Parker et al. argue that there is no "one" nationalist ideology and/or identity, nor is there one formation of sexuality. Therefore they take a more poststructuralist position, implying the need for more work on these two as they relate to one another. Nonetheless, Mosse's book remains a landmark exploration of the worlds of nationalism and sexuality. Published in the mid-1980s, Mosse's work laid foundations for explorations in this area even if it is only recently that the topic has gathered noticeable momentum in academic scholarship. One important observation Mosse makes is that our modern notions of nationalism and "respectable" sexuality emerged at the same time, with the Enlightenment and growth of capitalism. Mosse scrutinises the way nationalist ideas are inflected with a distinctive bourgeois politics of the body and sexual behaviour, and how

this morality subsequently fed into the emergence of fascist nation-states in Europe in the early 20th century. He writes:

This book is concerned with perceptions of sexuality, but also with the state and the nation. It seeks to trace the relationship between nationalism, the most powerful ideology of modern times, and respectability, a term indicating “decent and correct” manners and morals, as well as the proper attitude toward sexuality. The respectabilities we now take for granted, the manners, morals, and sexual attitudes normative in Europe ever since the emergence of modern society, have a history in which nationalism played a crucial role. Ideals that we may regard as immutable were novel some two hundred years ago, and just as modern nationalism emerged in the eighteenth century, so the ideal of respectability and its definition of sexuality fell into place at the same time (Mosse 1985, 1).

Also Sam Pryke's (1998) article attempts to theorise the link between the nation and sexuality in more general terms. In his work, Pryke distinguishes three crucial problems: national sexual stereotypes, sexuality in national conflict, and sex in nation-building (1998, 531). The first is about sexing Others as a threat to national ego (e.g. 1930s' German stereotypes that teaching French to young girls will lead them into prostitution). The second problem is the use of sexuality in the time of war, as exemplified in *interalia* rape cases during Balkan War (here sexual violence is used as part of the weaponry of war). The third, and final problem is the exclusion of certain sexual practices/attitudes (such as homosexuality, masturbation, or pre-marital sex, and so on) from the core of national ego (Pryke 1998, 535-41). Although these are important observations, conceptualising relations between nationhood and (homo)sexuality solely in these terms limits the potential for developing a more in depth understanding. For example, taking inspiration from writings on “everyday nationalism”, one is left wondering about times of peace as well as times of war, and about how the two discourses relate to each other in the context of “ordinary” life. Or, in relation to “homonationalism” debates (discussed later in the chapter), one can observe that nationalism is sometimes very inclusive of homosexuality, which complicates an understanding of nationalism as *a/ways* framing homosexuality as a threat.



During the 1990s there was an outburst of scholarship pertaining to “sexual citizenship” and “gay rights” (e.g. Benton 1991; Watney 1991; D. Evans 1993; Binnie 1997; Rahman 1998; Richardson 1998; Weeks 1998; Bell and Binnie 2000). In the context of this work, Carl F. Styhin in *“A Nation by Rights”* (1998) – working in the discipline of legal studies - makes an interesting attempt to theorise nationhood and sexuality. Using four case studies (USA, South Africa, Canada/Quebec, and Australia) he considers:

... how national identities are constituted in sexual and gendered terms, how groups mobilize around sexual identities and articulate their relationship to the national culture, and how rights discourse informs and constitutes both national and sexual identities (Stychin 1998, 1).

The main advantage of Stychin’s work is the acute and critical eye he has for the growth of rights discourses, and the role that ‘rights’ has come to play in discourses of sexual liberation and progress. However, his work is inevitably limited since it is focused only on “Western”, liberally democratic states. South Africa is an interesting case to consider here with its particular colonial history, oscillating in a ubiquitous space between “West” as well as its Other. As a consequence, the sexual politics in the country and the region is shaped according to “Western” models activism, but a cultural ambivalence of “post-colonialism” also opens up space allowing for resistance and subversion that would otherwise remain impossible (Spurlin 2006, 6). Additionally, since the ‘rights’ discourse necessarily relies on the notion of citizenship within a liberal democratic framework (from which it takes its origins in this particular form), Stychin’s work is more about “civil society” and “state” than about “people” and “nationhood”. Nevertheless, his work helps to develop understandings of the experiences of sexual minorities in minority<sup>vii</sup> “Western” democracies. However, there is a need for further work in this area if we want to more fully attend to the cultural, political, and national contexts that are not rooted in (or were only relatively recently introduced to) liberal democratic frameworks of statehood, duties and obligations defined via concepts of “citizenship” or “civil society”.

### **4.1. Un-common times of Modernity**

However useful in considering nationalism and sexuality, the work of George Mosse (1985) has some limitations. He focuses on 18th and the 19th century social and political changes, including industrialization and a new social stratification in Europe (e.g. the emergence of new social classes, bourgeoisie and workers). On this premise, Mosse has built his theory of sexuality and nationality encapsulated in the idea of "respectability" and bourgeois morality. From the perspective of a scholar interested in the CEE, his historical study concentrating on a handful of western European countries (Germany and to a significantly lesser extent United Kingdom, France and Italy only), is interesting, but has its restrictions of applicability. This is to do with his rather too general use and understanding of "Modernism" and "modern Europe", especially when he claims that "[t]o be sure, respectability eventually spread throughout Europe, a bourgeois movement at first, it soon encompassed all classes of the population" (Mosse 1985, 2). Mosse seems to forget that the populations and cultural make up of Germany (just constituting itself at the same time as one federal state we know today) was extremely diverse (Prussians, French, Poles, Bohemians, Italians, and others). Hence the social processes were likely not to develop in the same way across populations, hence were also spread unequally geographically. This opens up space for a consideration of "modernity" as the key factor in shaping relations between discourses of nationhood and homosexuality. The Eurocentrism and the supremacy of the "West" in the notion of "Europe" (that makes us presuming "Europe" to be first and foremost the "Western European" idea) remains also an important thread in the more recent scholarship in the topic. For instance, Jon Binnie in his path-setting *"The Globalization of Sexuality"* (2004) pays acute attention to the geographical differences in national and sexual politics. His aim is to theorize the links between globalization, nationalism, and sexuality in a comprehensive manner, by exploring how the "national" and the "global" are produced by the "sexual" (Binnie 2004, 2). Also the recent body of work around "sexual nationalisms" (e.g. El-Tayeb 2004; Puar 2007; Kuntsman and Miyake

2008; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; S. Ahmed 2011; Jivraj and De Jong 2011; Douglas, Jivraj, and Lambie 2011) has invested significant focus on questions around the topology of modernity. For example, Jasbir Puar (2007) and Judith Butler (2009) write about the use of sexuality discourses in the self-proclaimed civilising mission of the "West"/Europe/USA against the ("West"-proclaimed) "Muslim World". Butler analyses how U.S. militarism creates the notion of the "Arab mind" (savage) in order to pursue its own "civilising mission" (legitimation of its military attacks) (2009, 126). She shows how that "Arab mind" is constructed as something fixed that cannot be altered, and must remain "uncivilised". She shows how "our" ("Western") supposed modernity (advanced, secular, liberal, scientific) is counter-posed to "their" ("Arab") supposed pre-modernity (traditional, religious, non-liberal) (Butler 2009, 124-5).

Both writers primarily focus on the "West" and its fixation with "Islam". Perhaps this is why both seem to unintentionally "recreate" (to a certain degree) an active/passive, "West"/"Islam" dualisms, which they seek to challenge. Joseba Gabilondo (2004) offers a response here (although not directed at either writer directly). She notices that the "Islamic World" is not a passive object of these "Western" discursive practices, but also actively create their own narratives making a certain use of the ways in which they are interpolated. Gabilondo calls these "pagan narratives" (2004, 238) – "pagan" as in non Judeo-Christian, but also "pagan" as in alternative, "from the borderlands" of the (geographical, political and cultural) "West", and the (temporal) "Western Modernity". According to Gabilondo, however different, both worlds deploy the same logic (and aesthetic) of the spectacularly performative (2004, 239). In their extreme, fundamentalist form, American Hollywood productions or media coverage of Gulf Wars on the one side, and the Taliban and Al-Qaeda guerrilla militancy and spread of fear, with the bombing of the World Trade Centre on the other, serve as the example (Gabilondo 2004, 238-9). Gabilondo's work resonates with William Spurlin's (2006) observation about necessary challenges faced by both queer and post-colonial studies. These challenges have particular resonance in discussions

around nationhood and sexuality where the "West"/"the Rest" perspective dominates. He captures the core of these problems in the following words:

Examining South Africa's transition to democracy at the innovative conjunction of postcolonial and queer not only enables a necessary queering of postcolonial studies and an equally important decolonization of queer studies as I have just suggested, but also acknowledges and critiques, as I argue in chapter 1, other systems of domination and subordination that were implicated within the system of apartheid in addition to racism. Similarly, such an approach avoids a preoccupation with, or reification of, sexual difference alone, but is one way of bringing the politics of sexuality more to the forefront of critical discussion within South African struggles for democracy, while simultaneously bringing attention to the ways in which academic queer theory may be complicit in reproducing the hegemony of western scholarship. More important, the book's approach, evident in its title, implies a reconceptualization of center-periphery relations and a queering of social, not just sexual, space to the extent that peripheries are not merely the binary opposites of centers of power (the West, the Euro-American axis, heteronormativity, global markets and economies, etc.) but can both contain new, or quite possibly similar, forms of hegemonic power within them, as well as sites of supplementarity that cannot be wholly contained under the more traditional center/peripheral, West/East split (Spurlin 2006, 7-8).

## 4.2 Timely geographies

How do these debates around modernity, and the "West and the Rest" (Stewart Hall 1992) relate to Poland and the CEE? If, according to Frederic Jameson's famous book *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), we live in *postmodern* times, i.e. the times of "late capitalism", or Anthony Giddens' "late (high) modernity", or Zygmunt Bauman's "liquid modernity", what sort of *modernity* is lived in Central and Eastern Europe? If the West is characterised by "late capitalism", then CEE could be thought of as being in its infancy, in "early capitalism". Does such work implicitly suggest that Poland and the CEE are not in postmodernity? Or is the very temporal topsy-turvy twisting of social dynamics in Poland itself an example of postmodern jelly cream? Perhaps, using some of the concepts deployed by Jonathan Kemp (2009, 1–2), western modernity is already "posthumous" and "untimely" (rather than postmodern)? Because it ("late modernity") precedes itself (modernity) (thus, in a way becomes

"pre-modern") in the CEE. The modernity is "old"/late, yet "new"/early for the people of the CEE, who only after 1989 became subjects rather than objects of the "Western" (capitalist) historical narrative (assuming its part therein, no longer as a "counter-narrative"/para-temporality of communism). But this discussion still presumes "modernity" to belong to the "West". Indeed, should we not see (state) communism as the very bold realisation of modernism? Was not communism an entirely modernist project/project of modernisation (Heywood 2003)? The *universal* lineage of modernity and *postmodernity*/"late modernity" from the above mentioned texts is presumed to be *particular* to the history of the Western European industrialisation and development of capitalism since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, communism is denied as equally important to the development of modernism. Thus we have heard claims of "the end of history" (Fukuyama 1992), where the CEE is consequently locked into discourses of "development", "transition" and "return". Such a framing redistributes agency, subjectivity and individualism unequally, re-inscribing pre-1989 (Western) hegemonic divisions of Europe onto "advanced West" and the "backward CEE". Later in the chapter I will argue, as I do elsewhere (Kulpa 2012a), that such discourses have a profound impact on sexual politics in the region.

So far I have focused on sexualities and nationalisms as linked to the problems of temporality introduced in the previous chapter. There I highlighted how, in national narratives, time is often compounded and is definitely not linear but takes on a more cyclical nature (Puar 2007, xvi). Often the three main categories of time: past, present, and the future collapse onto each other, making it difficult to mark the difference between them. In many national narratives, past exists in the present, and only for the future. Not linear, then, time is, but definitely teleological. For example, the "Golden Era" of past generations is a common (foundational) national myth (e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; A. D. Smith 1991). It is however invoked performatively, it exists only in discourse, because, as Jenkins (1991) insists, we cannot establish one past, one history. So the "past" exists only "now", only in the present time/tense; the "past" is nested/embedded in the "present". But the "present" in any national narrative (or

other political ideology for that matter) is important as long as it serves a "future" goal. The "present" is a way to achieve a "Golden Future", when the "Golden Past" will be reinstalled *anew*. As I show later in the thesis (cf. Chapters 6 and 7) this ambiguous struggle over the meaning of the past and the future in national discourse remains closely related to the sexual politics in Poland.

Works by Butler, Puar, and Gabilondo, that I mentioned earlier focus on examples of the "Middle East" constructed as the "West's" radical Other, where the borderline between the two is presented as being rather clear-cut (at least in terms of how these two discourses are constructed in relation to each other). William Spurlin's (2006) questioning of this centre-periphery dyad in the context of South Africa opens a space for me in problematizing similar relations of power between the "West" and the CEE. There is a rich literature about CEE as the Western Other (e.g. Wolff 1994; Bakic-Hayden 1995; Todorova 1997; Forrester, Zaborowska, and Gapova 2004; Hammond 2004; Melegh 2006; Kovačević 2008; Miklóssy and Korhonen 2010) which often takes up the question of the usefulness of post-colonial studies when theorising relations between the "West" and "Central and Eastern Europe" and "Balkans" (which tend to have in the "Western" discourses more pejorative connotations). Gerard Delanty writes:

[what] was crucial in the shaping of Europe was the process by which the core penetrated into the periphery and semi-periphery to forge a powerful system of political and economic control. The diversity of Europe was the product of enforced dependency and much of its unity was the expression of hegemonic forms of identity deriving from the core. The idea of Europe remained the cultural model of the western core states. A major implication of this view is that the eastern frontier of Europe was above all a frontier of exclusion rather than of inclusion; it accelerated and intensified a process by which Europe became the mystique of the West (Delanty 1995, 48).

Here, Delanty summarises here how the "West"/"Europe" essentializes itself at the expense of the "East." However, what the literature about CEE brings forward is the particular place it has occupied and the role it has played in these "Western" self-essentializing discourses. Not as easily ostracised as the "East" (such as the colonised cultures of the "Far and Middle East") due to its geopolitical location,

yet equally not within the self-proclaimed and self-contained and *de facto* western "Europe," "CEE" is an ambiguous location (Todorova 1997, 17). Fluidity of borders, their porous character "is one of the most important traits of East-West slopes" (Melegh 2006, 36). "CEE" is rendered hence as a sort of transitional space between the "real East" and the "real West." Using the words of Larry Wolff (1994, 13) "Eastern Europe was located not as the antidote of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism". Drawing on these writings, I have developed the concept of *leveraged pedagogy* (Kulpa 2012a) specifically focusing on sexuality and discourses of "homophobia" and "gay (human) rights" which in my opinion are the "latest" additions to discursive relations between the "West" and the "CEE". My argument (which I return to later in this chapter) is that after the 2004 EU-enlargement, EU/Western Europe re-invented itself; "West" was reinscribed into the core notion of "Europe" through the projection of "homophobia" onto "CEE" whilst the West portrayed itself as progressive in terms of sexual diversity and liberation. Indeed, such understandings of temporalities ("advancement" and "backwardness") and geographies ("West" and "East") play a crucial role in further discussions over the discourses of nation and homosexuality in Poland, a country traditionally seen as "torn apart" between the Occident and Orient (Walicki 1994a; also cf. Chapter 5).

### **4.3 Nationalising sexuality**

One of my arguments in this chapter is that the nationhood relies on a heteronormative framework of relations, thus it is most often understood to reject non-normative sexualities (e.g. Lauren Berlant and Freeman 1992; Hanna 1996; Lambevski 1999; Conrad 2001; Fischer 2007). But nationhood may also be an inclusive force, willing to accommodate (to a degree and under conditions, that is) and "swallow" – to use Bauman's metaphor (1997) - its constitutive Other (e.g. homosexual subjects). For example French Canadian Quebecois nationalism (C. Stychin 1997; Dickinson 1999), post-apartheid nationalism of South Africa (Posel 2005; Spurlin 2006), or nationalisms of the USA, UK and the NL (Puar 2007;

Kuntsman and Miyake 2008; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010). This “opening” was possible, amongst other reasons, thanks to the changing position of lesbian and gay people in relation to the capitalist market; a shift from being figures of death to become figures of life (Puar 2007, xii; though this argument remains contestable, not only geographically, but also within the aforementioned national contexts). This “buying into” the mainstream, however, is said to privilege a particular sub-section of homosexual subjects, namely those who are white, middle class and financially secure, male, and ethnically ‘native’ (D. Evans 1993; Duggan 2002; 2004). Considering class at the crossroads of nationhood and homo/sexuality takes us back to the argument made by Mosse (1985). The link between respected sexuality, aberrant homosexuality, and class and capitalism, is however, tightly weaved into Western European history, privileging the grand narrative of “Europe”. However, for somebody interested in non-western European cultural logics of nationhood and homosexuality, the link might seem less pervasive. Although all societies are stratified, their histories of capitalism are significantly different, or social divisions fall within a remit of different indicators (than what is for instance understood to be class indicators), hence shaping different social relations. This finds support in writings of Jon Binnie (2004), who insists that when studying sexual politics in modern days of globalisation, researchers need to be particularly aware of trans-national power relations and local differences and particularisms. So explicitly locating studies of sexuality in a particular geographical location, may also help us to understand the workings of national sentiments. Geographical borders maintain (literal and metaphorical) boundaries of the nation-state, which – as I have been arguing - can be seen as tied up with the discourse of Self/Other. These geographical boundaries ward off an abject Other, as much as they foreclose a particular nation-state on its neighbours – other nations. But as much as boundaries zone off the Other (and influence everyday lives of individuals, for example in the global context of migration), they also *enclose* the constitutive Others within the body of the nation. Indeed, the point to make is that being within the national boundary does not ensure that individuals/groups straightforwardly belong to the *nation* (even if one



is a citizen of the *state*), as there is much of othering going on within the borders of nations. Often portrayed as foreign and alien in nationalist conservative discourse (Hayes 2000, 10; also cf. Chapter 6), homosexual subjects are amongst those who are othered within the borders of the nations in which they live.

For example, Polish LGBT groups have been called "eurosodomites" by counter-demonstrators (recruited mainly from the League of Polish Families Party and the All Polish Youth organisation) during the annual "gay pride" event. This captures the resentment towards the EU, blaming it as the source of supposed moral downfall, Sodom and Gomorrah, polluting Polish national culture. In the following chapters I try to develop a more complex analysis, where homosexual subjects are not only objects, but are also wilful actors upon the question of national belonging. It seems that they embrace nationhood to prove their belonging to the society (nation), thus gain the legitimisation of their life. "We are the Same/One", is used to show the "normality" (here associated with the socially/nationally accepted norms) of a lesbian and gay person, often played out as conformity to stereotypes of gender (e.g. Blasius 1994; Blasius and Phelan 1997; Rimmerman, Wald, and Wilcox 2000). In a sense it is about how place/space is translated into identity/identifications; how the modern geographical delimitation of a particular nation-state gives rise to the national and sexual "imagined communities". It is about how those geographical boundaries ward off radical Others (nations) and entrap others within its own body, somehow setting up a trap for itself, forcing national self to face those internal Others (e.g. homosexual subjects) at some point. Of course, as showed in the previous chapters, they are also necessary Others for the national self to emerge. This leads Jarrod Hayes to the following conclusion:

[o]ne cannot exclude someone from the Nation unless she is already there. (...) If there must be such an effort to exclude the queer from the Nation (...) and show she is an outsider trying to invade, the queer must always be inside already; that is, in some ways, the Nation is always already queer (Hayes 2000, 15-16).

There is another gate into the discussion over national and sexual identifications. In the Chapter 3 I have suggested that the nation exists as long as it is being constantly evoked in the discursive and material practices of everyday lives (Billig 1995; Palmer 1998; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008b). Nationalism then, is a process of calling a nation into being, and of bringing the "imagined community" into life and into mass imaginary through discourse. In that sense, nationalism always precedes the nation, the nation becomes existent after the nationalist call (interpellation?), a point already made by Ernest Gellner (1983).

Now, taking inspiration from Bhabha's writings about the nation as a performative act (2004), let me recall Judith Butler's concept of the performative, as another possible perspective on the relation of the two. It may be, perhaps, an obvious statement, but I still would like to make it: the nation and nationalism work similarly to gender and sex, a matter Butler elaborated on in "*Gender Trouble*" (Butler 2006a [1990]), "*Bodies That Matter*" (1993) and many other texts. As much as the notion of gender and sex is achieved thanks to the constant repetitive acts performing their phantasmatic existence, so is the imagined community of the nation also constituted performatively. Butler works on the examples of drag queens, analysing how they subvert the hegemonic ideas of gender and sex, by detaching masculinity from man and femininity from woman. What I would like to suggest here, is that drag queens do not only act out any women, any femininity; the show always incorporates a reference, and impersonation (to varying degrees) of a famous and iconic woman (in a specific cultural context), if only indicated by song choices from their repertoire. Of course there are also "international icons" (e.g. Lisa Minnelli, Madonna), but here we should be aware of the conflation of "American" or "British", with "English spoken", with "international". And in this, as I can tell from my own experiences of observing drag queen shows in different national cultural contexts, the audience usually gets the most invigorated and reacts most strongly to songs with a specific (to their nation) cultural reference. In other words not when any gender, but when "national gender" is performed. For instance, when Polish drag queens perform songs of Polish singer Violetta Villas, Czech singer Halina Vondrackova,

or Russian singer Alla Pugacova - all “superstars” of the communist period - there is a particular sense of community one feels, especially if there are “other people”, like friends from abroad, to whom one needs to explain what is particular to Polish culture about these particular singers and songs. The feeling proves to be rather un-translatable in any other than “post-communist” cultural contexts. These singers occupy the imagined space of “Poland” and evoke nostalgia of the “communist past”. The “communist nostalgia”, dressed up and performed through the embodiment of iconic singers of communism, is what “nationalise” these performances of a culturally (CEE) specific gender. And even if some singers come from other CEE countries, they partake as “Polish” because culture of “communist Poland” (as much as any other “communist country”) except of own national tradition was strongly infused with the “international communist culture”. Shaped by each of the “soviet block” countries, this cultural production of “international communism” now forms an undistinguishable part of each country’s national history.

As I have demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter, nationhood inseparably clings on to gender. Here I would like to take this argument a little further in a reverse gesture. If nations and national representations depend on particular gender politics, would it not be safe to presume that ideas about nationhood leave some marks on the constructions and notion of “gender” itself? Can we say then that gender necessarily (although, of course, to varying and flexible degrees) is “nationalised”? In our everyday performative acts of gender, we also always already act the nationally specific cultural regimes of gender. It does not necessarily mean that these national embodiments are radically different from each other; conversely it is perhaps their striking similarities, common features, motifs, tropes and icons, across the geographical (and temporal) boundaries of nation-states, that is most gripping (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Lutz, Phoenix, and Yuval-Davis 1995). So if we agree that gender does not exist outside the specificity of a culture (nation), so we need to think in a similar way about homo/sexuality. Since sexuality relies on normative gender that we can say is part of national cultures, so we also always already think and do “nationalised

homo/sexuality". It appears then, that in the contemporary socio-cultural divisions and diversities marked by the national and state borders delineating "locality" and "specificity" (not unproblematic, of course), there is always an inescapable grain of nationhood present in any formation of homosexuality. To demonstrate, I offer the example of "gaydar" – the supposed ability to sense and recognise other homosexual people without any prior knowledge of them. And as much as it is not too seriously treated a "group myth", it still holds a prominent place in defining "lesbian and gay culture" (in Poland and perhaps also elsewhere). But as any lesbian or gay person who has ever travelled to another country knows, "gaydar" sensibility quickly proves "dysfunctional" abroad. I learned this when I moved to London, observing that either most of the men in London were gay, or there was something wrong with my "gaydar" (i.e. presumption of "what a gay man is": how he looks, behaves, speaks, styles his hair and so on). Already academically trained, hence rather suspicious of any wishful optimism, I realised that "gaydar" is my culturally specific (that is national) Polish imprint of the ways in which male homosexuality is performed. Of course as with the "international icons" for drag queens, there is also an international "typology circuit" (e.g. "butch dyke", "screaming queens") of which one could learn by travelling abroad (or via all sorts of media nowadays). This partial internationalisation of homosexual iconography is perhaps the best example of the stronghold of national cultures in influencing the formations of sexuality and sexual politics. So rather than interpreting the nation as inescapable (in a pessimistic gesture), one perhaps could look at "local" creative and subversive interpretations, especially by those on its margins. Such an attempt at multiplying understandings and alterative readings will be explored in Chapters 7 and 8.

Let me return now to the opening paragraphs of this section. In recent years two terms, which I see as useful to consider when thinking through the relationship between discourses of nationhood and homosexuality, have gained increasing popularity in sexuality studies - "homonormativity" and "homonationalism". There is no doubt that nationalism is, in most cases, a practice, which grows out and feeds back into heteronormativity through its stress

on the primacy of the "normal" and the "national", and the value assignation to masculinity, heterosexual family and procreation (Nagel 1998; Peterson 1999; Mizielinska 2001). Heteronormativity as a concept gained popularity after its use in Michael Warner's influential book *"Fear of a Queer Planet"* (1993). Now it seems in queer, sexuality and gender studies, to be one of those taken-for-granted concepts. Without entering nuanced discussions over its meaning, I will use it here after Katherine Ludwin's operationalization (2011). For Ludwin, heteronormativity is about: "privileging of heterosexuality over all other sexualities"; it is "defining a 'normal way of life'"; it involves a "re-inscription of essentialist identity categories"; and it operates "as part of a broader matrix of socially mediating systems" (Ludwin 2011, 50). Heteronormativity is facilitated and manoeuvred on a number of structural levels, most importantly institutional and in everyday practices (Ludwin 2011, 51). Recent writings in queer studies, however, focus much attention on "homonormativity". What would it be? According to Lisa Duggan (2002), who significantly helped to popularise the term:

[t]he new neoliberal sexual politics (...) might be termed the new homonormativity – it is a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption (Duggan 2002, 179).

It is clear that the terms do not share much with each other on the conceptual level, and the similarity is only verbatim. This is strengthened by Duggan's statement that "there is no structure for gay life, no matter how conservative or normalizing, that might compare with the institutions promoting and sustaining heterosexual coupling" (2002, 191, footnote 9). Also Berlant and Warner have stressed the impossibility of a "homonormativity" that would function as "heteronormativity" does. They write:

Heteronormativity is thus a concept distinct from heterosexuality. One of the most conspicuous differences is that it has no parallel, unlike heterosexuality, which organizes homosexuality as its opposite.

Because homosexuality can never have the invisible, tacit, society-founding rightness that heterosexuality has, it would not be possible to speak of "homonormativity" in the same sense (Laura Berlant and Warner 1998, 548, footnote 2).

In all this, I would argue that even though theoretically it is clearly distinct from heteronormativity, it is nonetheless a rather confusing term. This is what occasionally happens in the writing of e.g. Jasbir Puar (2007), when the text seems to flow beyond the intentions (I would imagine) of the author, and occasionally leads the reader astray of the author's intended meanings. For example, when she defines "homonationalism" as a moment when "certain homosexual bodies signify homonormative nationalism" (Puar 2007, 10). Being aware of the limited scope of her referent, Puar points out that writing on "homonationalism" is not to disavow existing violence and discrimination, nor to imply the cohesion and evenness of the very concept (Puar 2007, 10). However, her persistent use and the way of invoking "homonormativity" creates that impression, suggesting an overarching and uniform contemporary "mainstream LGBT" politics. Consequently not much space is left for alternatives (within and beyond "mainstream"), hence homonormativity is after all, being understood like heteronormativity. Surly it is not her point, yet still, when one reads

[c]oncomitantly, multicultural (and homonormative) subjects reorient their loyalty to the nation through market privileges, a remasculinisation that Heidi Nast terms "market virility", that masquerade as forms of belonging to the nation and mediate the humiliation of waiting for national love (Puar 2007, 26-27)

one keeps wondering why Puar uses derogatory language such as "masquerading" and "humiliation", in this context? One could ask what is so necessarily wrong with a desire to be recognised as a part of the national community, to build one's own identification in relation to/with fellow nationals ("to be subject"), rather than (voluntarily or not) against them ("to be abject/object")? Of course, Puar is absolutely right that it becomes wrong when the belonging of some minority subjects is used to foreclose and ward off other minorities (notably minority ethnic

individuals and communities, especially Muslim). However, in “waiting for national love” and in the will to belong, there is nothing necessarily wrong in the first place. Unless, of course we accept the rather narrow understanding of nationhood as always already negative and bad in formation. It seems to me that Puar at times falls into that trap, and projects a rather restricted perspective on nationalism as something almost exclusively pervasive, militant and exclusionary. Even though she boldly presents us with the U.S. case of recent reorientations of nationalist internal dynamics to include (or rather swallow) those who were previously “repulsive” (i.e. homosexual objects, now subjects) – her own style of writing and those occasional “slippages” as in the quote above, indicate some uninvited contradiction and tensions on the topic. I suggest some of these “uninvited tensions” stem from the problematic notion of “homonormativity”. Even if supposedly sharply and clearly defined, it will retain the surplus of meaning, overflowing the author's intended signification (thus possibly meaning more, or being interpreted by a reader differently). In consequence, “homonormativity” may be read as the “gay equivalent” of “heteronormativity”. Also “homonationalism” raises constant questions about the meaning of the term itself, in what context it relates to, and who is the subject and object of the homonationalist practice/discourses. For this reason, I prefer not to use it in relation to my own work, and propose to talk about a “heteronormativity” (rather than “homonormativity”) of LGBT politics. This way, we actually capture the practice that is at stake and avoid unintentionally implying that homonormativity is like heteronormativity. This is my standing in Chapter 8, where I analyse the LGBT campaign “Let Them See Us”. It should also be stressed after Puar herself, that her case study only concerns the USA, and thus the analysis and theoretical conceptualisations may not translate straightforwardly onto other (in this case CEE/Polish) cultural contexts. I will show this in Chapter 7, when I analyse questions of belonging and attachment in “queer mourning after the homophobic president”. But also in the very content of “homonormativity” and “homonationalism”, there are some important geo-temporal distinctions worth highlighting. Both concepts are tightly related, and the “new homonormativity” is

not only an outcome of the neoliberal cultural politics (Duggan 2002, 2003), but also an active ingredient of “homonationalism”, which is defined by Jasbir Puar, as:

[a] way in how queer subjects are relating to nation-states, particularly the United States, from being figures of death (i.e. the AIDS epidemic) to becoming tied to ideas of life and productivity (i.e. gay marriage and families). The politics of recognition and incorporation entail that certain - but certainly not most - homosexual, gay, and queer bodies may be the temporary recipients of the “measures of benevolence” that are afforded by liberal discourses of multicultural tolerance and diversity. This benevolence toward sexual others is contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity (Puar 2007, xii).

In the Polish context, there is no “mainstreaming” of LGBT politics through, for example, the normalising gesture of “homoinclusivness” (although there are normative undercurrents present and deployed by the LGBT organisations themselves). Since Poland is not a multi-ethnic country (Polish citizenship - 99,7% of population; Polish national-ethnic cultural belonging - 93,7%; other ethnic belonging declared by 3,6%, of which 2,1% declared double Polish and non-Polish ethnic identification, and only 1,5% ‘exclusively’ non-Polish) (GUS 2012), questions concerning multiculturalism and racism cannot be directly transposed into Polish context. And the “traditionally Polish” anti-Semitism plays a rather different role in this configuration (cf. Chapter 5). Whilst they may desire norms of “social respectability” and “good citizenship” by embracing neoliberal values, gay and lesbian people in Poland are certainly not (yet) the “consumers of privilege” in the same way as their “mainstream gay and lesbian” counterparts in some Western countries arguably are (D. Evans 1993; Chasin 2000; Duggan 2004).

Additionally literature examining the dynamics of homosexual subject’s belonging to the nation-state in Western contexts (mainly the UK and USA) often differentiates between “mainstream LGBT” and “alternative queer” politics. The former are understood to comply with the nationalist discourses, while the latter



are arguably more critical and sceptic about such “homoinclusion”. However, this does not seem to have much to do with the young LGBT movements in the CEE, where it is impossible to talk about “waves” of development (Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011a). (Not to mention that the situation is also more complex in those “Western” contexts, which makes such classifications highly problematic to begin with.) As I will argue in the Chapters 6-8, homosexual subjects are not straightforwardly objectified as “marionettes” of the carefully orchestrated national politics (that “swallows” them for own purposes and turns against e.g. migrant communities). Instead, I will show that they are exerting agency and wilful subversion towards the national discourses, that sexual politics in Poland cannot be deemed as “depoliticised” and “domesticated”. These observations clearly show differences between the “West” (if one accepts Puar and other’s argument about the “West” in the first place, that is) and CEE/Poland in respect of relations between the national and sexual discourses, and indicate a welcomed contribution of my project into the queer scholarship. The tensions and problematic nature of “homonationalism” in relation to the CEE/Polish context have led me to offer an alternative concept - *leveraged pedagogy* - which I mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Judith Butler's "*Frames of War*" (2009) analyses how the "West" and "Europe" are discursively framed as privileged spheres of "modernity", "where sexual radicalism can and does take place. Often, but not always, the further claim is made that such a privileged site of radical freedom must be protected against the putative orthodoxies associated with new immigrant communities" (2009, 102). She then illustrates this with the case of the Netherlands whose recent immigration policy confronts certain immigrants (notably those from the "Middle East") with images of homosexual couples. Their reactions and attitudes to these pictures is one of the measurements of their "progress" and stage of modernity, and hence acceptability for entry. For the same reason, immigrants from Europe or the USA do not have to take the same test, as presumably they are always already modern (enough) (Butler 2009, 105). As mentioned above, these are the discursive practices framing "Arabs", the "Middle East", and "Islam" as "pre-

modern" and "barbaric" and in need of "civilising", even with the use of force and armed invasion, and at the price of annihilation.

Looking at this from the CEE perspective, I would also add *leveraged pedagogy* (Kulpa 2012a) as another strategy of "protecting" and "promoting" "Western modernity". As discussed earlier, CEE has always figured in the "Western"/"European" imagination as one of its Others. In contrast with the "Middle East", which is perceived as radically Other, CEE has - at least from the collapse of the "Iron Curtain" - become an object of western "leveraged pedagogy" ("is being taken care of") rather than subject to any "civilising (annihilating) mission". So the deployment of this sexual discourse by the "West" in relation to the CEE differs to that of "homonationalism" in that the two geographical *loci* are not framed as two irreversible extremes. *Leveraged pedagogy* would be, at its simplest, a hegemonic relation of the "West/Europe" towards the CEE, in which the CEE is represented as "post-communist", "in transition" (i.e. not liberal, yet, enough), and last but not least: "homophobic". Leveraged pedagogy works as a condemnation but also as a "promise of redemption", because of the geographical location and proximity to the self-proclaimed Universality of Western Europe. It is especially striking in relations between EU member states. On one hand there are European offers of "maternal" hospitality made to newly formed CEE states, with "invitations to reform", to return to the womb of Europe and the "European family" (i.e. to join the European Union). It is a discourse of "common values", "shared history", "same Judeo-Christian roots", "security" and "cooperation" that we find in all major EU founding documents, the 2008 Lisbon Treaty being most recent. On the other hand there are "paternal" requests and demands represented by laws and regulations, stipulating privileges and rewards to the adaptation to "European norms" (manifested in e.g. the indisputability of "directives", or the less severe inductivity of "recommendations"). The dynamic of conditioning is a general working mechanism that regulates relations between the EU and all member states, but it is a development of a particular discourse of "homophobia in CEE" and the EU engagement in the promotion of "gay rights" that sets the relation between the "West/Europe" and the CEE as different to that of the "West" and the

"Islam". I suggest that the CEE is somehow "European enough" to be "taken care of", but "not yet Western" to be allowed into the "First World" club. Here I want to stress that I do not want to deny homophobia in the CEE or anywhere else, but to highlight that I am talking about a particular "Western/European" framing of homophobia in CEE that relegates "the problem/homophobia" to the CEE, implicitly re-creating the "Western" core of Europe as secular, progressive, and supportive of "human (gay) rights". To sustain this model as superior (self-essentializing of the "West" as liberal), the CEE is rendered as permanently "post-communist", "catching up", and on an uneven slope of "progressive distance/proximity" from the peak of "West/Europe" ideal (Melegh 2006). I argue that whereas this dependency could be traced back to discourses concerning various spheres of life, politics, culture and economics, in the field of "European values" it is the "gay (human) rights" that became ostensibly marked as a litmus test of "CEE progress" towards "West/Europe" values. My argument resonates with what others (e.g. Puar 2006; Haritaworn 2009) have written, that one of the main indicators of this "progress" or rather "backwardness" is homophobia, which is constructed as an innate, organic feature of CEE societies.

#### **4.4 Homoeroticism, homosociality, and nationhood**

Before drawing the chapter to a close, I return to the work of George Mosse (1985). He pays a great deal of attention to the intricacies of sexuality, industrialisation, new class formations, the rise of nationalism and fascism as political ideologies, all much centred around masculinity and relations between men. It was Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985; 1990), however, who significantly contributed to theorisation and popularisation of the term "homosociality" that captures these dynamics. Since then, we have witnessed a proliferation of the publications on the topic (e.g. Segal 1990; Allen 1999; Dean 2000; Peterson 1999; Hayes 2000; Heineman 2002). In *"Between Men"* (1985) Kosofsky Sedgwick elaborates on 19th century English culture. More specifically, to use her own words from *"Epistemology of the Closet"* (1990), she writes of "the oppressive effects on women and men of a cultural system in which male-male desire

became widely intelligible primarily by being routed thorough triangular relations involving a woman" (Sedgwick 1990, 15). Similar observations are made by V. Spike Peterson (1999) in relation to the nation and heterosexism. In her account, nationalist ideologies are heterosexist in that they foster fraternity and male homosocial bonding, and sexuality becomes more broadly mapped into political behaviour and institutional organisation. At the same time, national narratives about the importance of future generations and reproductive time impose heterosexual family as the *loci* of attention (Edelman 2004). This, in turn, helps the prohibition and discouragement of homosexual practices (Peterson 1999). Similar observations about the homosocial cultures of Maghreb (specifically Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and the post-colonial rise of national movements are made by Jarrod Hayes in his compelling book on Maghrebian literature: "*Queer Nations. Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb*" (2000). Hayes also shows how the rise of nationalism in these three countries severely restricted and devalued homosexual practices, common among Maghrebian men, and lifted up by patriarchal Islamic visions of gender roles, while still maintaining high levels of homosociality (Hayes 2000, especially Introduction and Part One).

Many other writers (e.g. Boellstroff 2005; Inglis 2005; Fischer 2007) show that the more homosocial a national culture is, the fiercer the rejection of homosexuality (homophobia). But how is the tension produced by the contradictory vectorial orientations dealt with in those male homosocial settings? To answer this question, I want to bring back the concepts of "desire" and the "erotic" which were addressed by Sedgwick, but are not as popular as one could imagine in the other literature.

It should be noted that the rejection of homosexual desire by the homosocial culture of national institutions does not necessarily mean a rejection of sexuality *per se*. Contrary, I would suggest that the stronger the rejection of *homosexuality*, the stronger the perpetuation of the *heterosexual* fantasy. What is strikingly important, however, is the fact that fantasising and acting upon *heterosexuality* is sometimes enacted by groups of men in homosocial settings, and done by, for, and through other men – i.e. it is *homoerotic*.

The rejection of homosexuality as an aberration and potential threat is enacted by national institutions (e.g. Parliament, as in the case studied in the Chapter 6) by groups of men. Similarly, heterosexual acts (and fantasies) are group acts in homosocial settings; although performed "solo" they are "in assistance" of others. For instance, watching pornography together, exchanging and commenting on it, group wanking, telling stories of (hetero)sexual conquests and (hetero)sexual adventures, up to the extreme of homophobic group rape of a "sissy". These are examples of the ways that *heterosexual* fantasy is perpetuated by men for male pleasure, within enclosed male homosocial circles. They are about showing off, competing, and (hyper) masculinising. The more a man needs to prove himself as not "queer" in the eyes of other men, the more "straight" and "masculine" he thinks he needs to be for the acclamation of other men. Straight men play out what gay men describe as the "butch" or "daddy" (always "top" and "active" though) types. And as much as this type of masculinity, when enacted in gay men's cultures, is a form of performing attractiveness for other (gay) men, so it is as well, I would argue, a form of attractiveness performed by (supposedly) straight men for other (supposedly) straight men in the settings of the homosocial institutions important to nationhood (sports teams, army, prisons, and alike). Following others mentioned above, I would suggest that there is an undercurrent of homoerotic desire when homosocial national institutions reinforce anti-homosexual attitudes by perpetuating *heterosexual* fantasy and practice, but solely for the pleasure and confirmation of (supposedly straight) men. The "embodied presence" of homoeroticism is a medium of dealing with the tension created by "absently present" homosexuality, a moment when the men's desire for other men forecloses the possibility of articulation in the act of sexual encounter.

I believe we can also make this mechanism a more metaphorical condition of relations between nationalists and the nation, taking place on (at least) three levels. Firstly, we can recognise that national movements perpetuate homosocial bonding at the expense of women who are discursively and materially subordinated (Yuval-Davis 1997; Nagel 1999; Peterson 1999). Secondly, national discourses reject homosexuality as a threatening Other to the national

body (Hayes 2000). And thirdly, national discourses could be labelled homoerotic, for they are about the love of one's country. Let me explain the last point. Since the country/nation is represented as female (Yuval-Davis 1997), nationalists (predominantly male, cf. Nagel 1998) perpetuate a *heterosexual* fantasy of the nation, envisaging their relationship to be that of a happily married life, and the nation as a family (McClintock 1995). The idea of a nation remains male-dominated, male-perpetuated, male-performed, male-cantered and most importantly, male-for-male acted out homoerotic nationhood.

## 4.5 Summary

This forth chapter has further set out the framework of my research, highlighting gaps and "blind spots" in the existing literature, where I hope to contribute in return. I envisage this input in the form of bringing the CEE into focus. Whilst I find existing literature on nationhood and homo/sexuality engaging and inspiring, it is clear that researches focused on areas outside of "Western" geo-cultural and geo-temporal contexts are left with many opportunities for further research. "The Rest", to use Stuart Hall's expression (1992), especially Central and Eastern Europe is clearly under-theorised. In providing an overview of writing and thinking in nationhood and sexuality area, I have also offered my own conceptualisations, for instance those conceding *homoeroticism* in the homosocial institutions; the preference of heteronormativity over homonormativity; leveraged pedagogy. Having outlined the theoretical relations between nationhood and homo/sexuality, it is time now to move to Chapter 5, where I provide the reader with further context, focusing on Poland's historical and cultural formations of nationhood, gender, and sexuality.

## ***Chapter 5***

### ***Poland: national context***

This chapter is intended to provide some necessary (for understanding the analysis in the Chapters 6 to 8) background information about the Polish culture and history. I equip the reader with insights into logic of the Polish nationhood until the 1989 (which I call “Traditional Polishness”), suggesting that the “post-1989” reality requires re-constitution of the Polish nationhood and the notion of the national identity. It is in this rapture symbolised by the year 1989, between the realities of the lost sovereignty, war occupation, and state communism (pre-1989), and the (post-1989) neoliberal capitalism and liberal democratic state regime - where I see the tensions giving rise to the intensified relationship between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality.

Let me first try to summarise motifs and characteristics of Polish nationhood as they are presented in the existing literature about the topic. Although each author stresses different factors, the core of Polish nationhood seems to point towards the following, at times somewhat contradictory, aspects: (1) the strong influence of religious values on the notion of Polishness, and the dominant role of the Catholic Church (Chrypinski 1989; Genevieve Zubrzycki 2007); (2) related to this, Polish Anti-Semitism (Michlic 2006); (3) the significance of hostile relations with Russians and Germans (Kostrzewa 1990; Auer 2004); (4) the exclusionary character of Polish nationalism, fuelled by a sense of inferiority (in relation to Germany/the “West”) and superiority (over Russia/the “East”) in relation to neighbour countries (Lipski 1990; Szrett 1990; Nycz 2002); (5) Romanticism, martyrdom and victimhood (Janion 2000; Zieliński 2002); (6) the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of Polish society until WWII, compared with its almost uniquely homogenous character after WWII (Romaniszyn 2005); (7) the unresolved tension between Romantic idealism and Positivist pragmatism (Bodio 1999); (8) the exclusively heterosexual dimension of national roles (Hauser 1995; Siemieńska 2000; Graff 2009); (9) and more recently, a crisis of values and

underpinnings of Polishness in the changing social, political, cultural and economic circumstances after 1989 (Krzemiński 2001; Jakubowska 2002).

Of course, this list does not claim to represent all the issues that may have formed/influenced the development of Polish national identity. National identifications are far too complex phenomena and processes to enclose them in the simple list; we need to take into account each historical period, political situation, social belonging, among other factors, that shape and shift the content of “national identity” constantly. Perhaps it is even impossible to talk about “Polish national identity” at all, because of the constant movement of constitutive elements and adaptations of ideas, their selection and (over)valorisation, and temporary absences, all varying at different times. So this elicitation is only meant to help in exploring issues of homo/sexuality and nationhood, here and in the following chapters. This one is organised along themes and tropes previously introduced in Chapters 3 and 4, and here contextualised and attuned to the specific Polish cultural dimension. I believe all the issues listed above and introduced earlier in the thesis point towards the tension between the community and the individual, the nation and its others, the public and the private, past and present and future.

## **5.1 Poland in the 19th century**

The 18th and 19th centuries are widely recognised as significant periods in the European history of social ideas (e.g. Feyerabend 1993; Crotty 1998; Kukla 2000). It is therefore important to realise that when in the Western Europe modern political ideologies (such as liberalism, nationalism, socialism) developed, Poland did not exist. Indeed, one of the often-discussed reasons for the collapse of the Polish state by the end of the 18th century was its inability to respond to shifting modes of production (i.e. from feudal and agrarian to industrial and urban-based) and social re-configurations (emerging new social stratifications and values), resulting in the general backwardness of Poland in comparison with western countries (Kochanowicz 2006). Prussian (and later German) imperial politics in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) coincided with the birth of nationalism as the



political ideology, and the beginnings of German “blood and soil” nationalism in particular (which under the banner of unifying the German people served as one of the justifications of expansionism) (Berman 1998). Conversely, Polish nationalism is, I would tentatively suggest, more of an outcome of the threat and reaction to the imperial politics of neighbour countries. “Polish nationalism” was an elite-driven movement to include the masses of a thus far politically and socially deprived society (which constituted 9/10 of the pre-1795 Poland) (L. Johnson 1996, 110) So although nationalism was not a response to shifting social stratifications following industrial revolution and mass migrations of people from traditionally bonded rural communities to new, alienating urban settings, Gellner (1983) was right when writing that it is often a nationalism of elites that creates the nation of people.

The differences in historical development of the Polish and Western European nation-states may be illustrated with reference to George Mosse’s *“Nationalism and Sexuality”* (1985). As I suggested in the Chapter 4, Mosse’s lack of recognition of the cultural and geo-social composition of 19th century “Germany” makes him claim too easily that the spread of the bourgeoisie across “Germany” was followed by the spread of ideas of respectability and “proper sexuality”. This would mean that “Polish” parts of “Germany” were part of these processes. After the incorporation of significant parts of Central and Eastern European countries, the ethnic make up of “Germany” was very diverse, with different official (and native German) attitudes towards various (other) ethnic groups inhabiting these territories. I would suggest that in the cases of incorporated lands, the spread of “respectable sexuality/morality” may not have taken place, or at least be severely restricted, through e.g. the lands being the subject to other policies. For example, on the Polish territories it was the specific cultural politics of “Germanization”, aimed at the eradication of Polishness, rather than designed to incorporate Poles and their Polishness into (“native”) “German” society. What we are dealing with here, is thus a need to historicise the idea of “Europe” with particular cultural interest in different and not necessarily overlapping (geo)political boundaries.

Here we should also acknowledge that three different countries (Russia, Prussia, Austria) deployed different techniques of “de-Polonization” and incorporation. Therefore, stepping down from the grand narrative of Polish nationalism to meso and micro levels of actual practices of nationalism, seems a logical continuation of this analysis. Benedict Anderson’s idea of “imagined community” (1991) may become especially useful in the Polish case (of 123 years of state non-existence between 1795-1918). For a population without a state (which was/is seen as the basis of national sovereignty), of old feudal tenures and dependencies, under the pressure of three culturally different (nation-)states - Poland as an “imagined community” is perhaps the only, or at least the best, way to describe and think about it. It is especially relevant because it was the literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism and Positivism that began to be mass printed and widely distributed - and thus had an immense impact on the shape of Polish national ideologies (Walicki 1994b). But the role and workings of imagination in discussion of Polish nationalism are multiple.

The dream of a free Poland was first realised after the First World War in 1918. Withheld by the Nazi occupation during World War II, freedom came about once again in 1945 for the second time. Once there was a Polish state there was supposedly no need to dream about freedom or fighting for it. However, the national desire for freedom was soon re-animated, because the “free Poland” was founded under the influence of the USSR, which was easily portrayed as another version of Poland’s “old enemy” (Russia). Thus, Russian/USSR influence over the region was quickly re-conceptualised as another imperial subordination. Let me suggest here, in a tentative and hypothetical manner that if during the 123 years of partition, Poles were “imagining Poland”, after the WWII, they were “imagining free Poland”. “Imagined (national) community” (Poland) became the “imagined (promise of true) democracy” (free Poland); “imagined democracy” is also a temporal category, indicating “democracy to come...” after communism. But does the national narrative of “imagined democracy” conceive the shape of the future? Here again Polish Romanticism with its idealism steps in, and meets its longstanding adversary, the Positivist pragmatic idea of “organic work” and “small

steps" (Bodio 1999; Auer 2004, 61). Tadeusz Bodio in his book *"Between Romanticism and pragmatism"* (1999) undertakes the task of analysing how the two 19<sup>th</sup> c. cultural trends in Polish culture are in constant battle over the influence and the meaning of Polishness under various historical circumstances. He shows how the idealised vs. pragmatic approach to the national question, aside from the "East"/"West" division, was of crucial importance for shaping post-1989 "psychopolitical" climate and Polish society, "the Polish nation" (Bodio 1999). Bodio shows how the two philosophical traditions and cultural trends influenced contemporary attitudes and choices about how to reconcile values, norms and beliefs with pragmatic solutions; how to live between the ideal of "imagined democracy" and "everyday democracy" (of e.g. voting and trust into political elites), between the "market economy" and neoliberal capitalism of full shops, but empty wallets.

This brings me back to the literature on "everyday nationalism", introduced in Chapter 3 (e.g. Palmer 1998; Caldwell 2002; Edensor 2002; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008a), which helps to understand how the "private" sphere was/is important in the transmission of national values and identifications, with all its idealisms and practicalities. The role of family (and especially women in it) as an individual and social unit of conversion of values into everyday practices and performances is especially important here (Yuval-Davis 1997). Poland was no different in this respect. Daily routines of life were/are dependent social status and location and access to material and symbolic capital. These dynamics continue to be woven into the public and political fabric of social and cultural life - that is nationhood. Below I show how gender became harnessed within the private sphere to serve a "higher national good" and the public/political fight for independence. The same can be said about sexuality through the paradigm of heteronormativity of gender formations.

## **5.2 National and individual**

Genevieve Zubrzycki (2007) in the opening of her article about symbolic representations of the nation in Poland, writes that

[t]he most common and pervasive Polish myth is that of Poland's intrinsic Catholicity: *Polonia semper fidelis* (Poland always faithful), the bulwark of Christendom defending Europe against the infidel (however defined); the Christ of nations, martyred for the sins of the world and resurrected for the world's salvation; a nation whose identity is conserved and guarded by its defender, the Roman Catholic Church, and shielded by its Queen, the miraculous Black Madonna, Our Lady of Czestochowa; a nation that has given the world a pope and rid of the Western world of Communism (Zubrzycki 2007, 131).

However imagined or un/true this may be, as in case of any myth, it is hard to deny that these are indeed all-pervasive perceptions of Polishness and Catholicism. The Catholic Church is important in Polish history, if only because, as Auer (2004, 68-9) writes:

(...) [The Catholic Church] had been seen as the only reliable intuition supporting the cause of the Polish nation for almost 200 years (since 1795). Roman Catholicism distinguished a nation occupied by German Protestants, then Russians who were Orthodox, and later controlled by communists who were atheists.

Catholicism not only came to signify, *pars pro toto*, Polishness during years of partition/occupation, but also the Church as the widespread institution, served as the alternative/underground state. It helped to link people together, to spread elites' ideas to the masses, and it offered a relatively safe space of resource mobilisation for those who were ready to rebel against governments. However, as Porter argues (referred to in Auer 2004, 188), the Church's role is much more ambivalent than usually assumed. For example, during the 19th century it seems that the Church did not much care about the partition and political annihilation of the Polish state. So perhaps it would be reasonable to distinguish between Catholicism as institution (the Catholic Church) and as religiosity (religious practices and beliefs of people). This would help to understand why for example during 19th century, although the institution was rather tame and indifferent to partitioning, religiosity still played a significant role in the formation and practice of national identification. This distinction may also become useful later, when

discussing post-1989 changes, as the division of Catholicism into institution and belief/worldview comes to play an even more interesting role<sup>viii</sup>.

The situation changed significantly during communism, when the Catholic Church became actively engaged with politics and anti-government opposition (Auer 2004, 68-70). It was possible because the Church in Poland enjoyed significant independence from the communist state. Although the communist governments tried to reduce the Church's influence and keep the clerics under control, the institution was never the subject of severe restrictions (Chrypinski 1989, 257) (as e.g. it was in Russia or Romania). If during the partition period in the 19th century it was religiosity rather the institution of the Church that kept and bound Poles together - during communism, the two got merged, and perhaps even reversed. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the institution of the Church remained indifferent, it was religious belief and religious practice that helped to maintain the common identification, thus fostering the sense of unity and community that could eventually become what we today call nation/ality. During the communist period, it was the Church as its antinomy (tradition vs. novelty of communism, known vs. unknown of future) that rose to prominence. Taking part in the religious celebrations and events came to symbolise an anti-communist stance and opposition to official governmental politics. At that time partaking in religious rituals was a form of political activity and a civic act manifesting one's disapproval of the dominant political system. Of course it is not to argue that spirituality and religiosity were abandoned; conversely, I want to highlight here that it was the politicisation of religious practice that ultimately elevated the Catholic Church to the status-symbol of political opposition. As Zubrzycki writes (2007, 140), the cross came to symbolise not only Poland, but *free* Poland. Taking part in Church practices (independently of one's own beliefs) was to express one's opposition to communist government, perceived as the occupying force (see also: Heynold quoted in Wagner 2003, 203). This process of politicizing religious practice could be seen as a leeway into subduing the individual to the collective as personal spiritual practice became institutionalised as an expression of group politics. Indeed,, after 1989, according to Zubrzycki there was a conservative re-

appropriation of collective values and a powerful dismay of individualism and secularism as “traitors” to Polish sovereignty – now the nation’s most cherished treasure.

In particular, Solidarity - the independent worker’s union that evolved into a social movement, and later served as the base for the governing political elites - benefited from this Church-nation liaison. As Osa (1997) argues:

The Church was crucial in the emergence and activation of the movement across social boundaries. Pastoral mobilization that began with the Great Novena of the Millenium preceded and laid the foundation for the political breakthrough and social action of the Solidarity era. Religious activists developed (cooptable) social networks, provided organizational resources, elaborated master frames, and created and action repertoire for strategic opposition (Osa 1997, 365).

The Church marched into politics together with one of the most powerful members of this movement, Lech Walesa. He wore a brooch of the Madonna pinned to the chest pocket of his jacket, as a visual, metaphorical but also very material manifestation of Catholicism being rooted in the new elites. Even more, the symbolic identification of Catholicism and political opposition were not only significant to that one person, but were accepted as collective and uniting emblems. Lech Walesa acknowledges this publicly: “during their memorable strike in 1980, the first thing the Gdansk workers did was to affix a cross, an image of the Virgin Mary, and a portrait of John Paul II to the gates of the shipyards. They became the symbols of victory” (Lech Walesa quoted in: Osa 1997, 362). The power of symbolism and symbolic politics of nationalism lead some scholars in nationalism studies to pursue the argument of the religious substitution by nationhood (e.g. Llobera 1994; Greenfeld 1995; Marvin and Ingle 1996; Friedland 2003). However, the Polish case seems to have its own narrative in this respect, which led Zubrzycki to conclude that

Liah Greenfeld (1995) suggested that the treatment of nationalism as a modern religion stems from the fact that nationalism is a form of consciousness that sacralises the secular, hence the temptation to treat it as a religion, albeit a civil religion. Although this is useful, it does not go far

enough. The Polish case point to a different and overlooked process. Because of Poland's peculiar political history, it was not political institutions and symbols that were sacralised and became the object of religious devotion (following the French revolutionary model), but religious symbols that were first secularized, and then *resacralized as national* (Zybrzycki 2007, 149).

With an attempt to establish (neo)liberal (i.e. secular) democracy after 1989, this *ménage a trois*: state, Church, political elites, would soon become rather problematic. Something unfortunate, ironic, and paradoxical happened to the Poles on their way to liberation. Although fighting in the name of freedom and liberty, the help and indispensable role of the Catholic Church in the process somehow erased plurality from the notion of liberty, offering a vision of freedom defined under collectivist terms (that is not that distinct from the values of rather oppressive state communism). Respect of individuality was lost somewhere in the transition from oppression to 'freedom', and from the state's lost sovereignty and its epiphany after the 1989. As Bielasiak (2010, 45) observed:

Thus, while the ideals of pluralist democracy were openly acknowledged, there were evident obstacles in reconciling the legacy of solidarities with the divisive nature of pluralist politics. Instead, the visionary world of Solidarity was carried forth into the liberated public space, which continued to be infused with a language of common purpose. The country's transformation was a universal good that was difficult to reconcile with "particularities" that served specific economic or social groups. As a result, values formed during the communist period carried forth into the new era, as cleavages based on the communist–anti-communist and religious–secular identities tended to prevail over divisions based on socioeconomic interests.

Summarising this section, I want to stress that the discussion about religion and the Catholic Church may help us understand the current underpinning of collective discourses, where the notion of the nation seems to be more valued than that of the individual - a situation that directly shapes relation between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality.

### **5.3 Polish cultural constructions of gender and sexuality**

In the Chapter 4 I have written that it is important to understand how gender is (ab)used in the national/ist discourses and practices. Agnieszka Graff (2009, 133) summarising the rich literature in this field, which I have also introduced in the Chapter 4, recapitulates that gender and sexuality are important elements of nationalist exclusionary discourses, subjugating women as passive “bearers of culture”, and men as active “warriors”. Additionally, in the Polish case we need to consider the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Romanticism, not only for the Polish nationalism, but also for the stabilisation and conservation of Polish attitudes to gender and sexuality (Janion 2000). This thought inspired Malgorzata Radkiewicz (2005), who analyses Polish contemporary cinema, to show how these conceptions of gender and sexuality formed in the 19th century are tenacious in the modern Polish audio-visual culture. One of the most persisting images is Polonia and Polish Mother/Mother the Pole<sup>ix</sup>.

There is a rich literature about the Polish gendered national imagination and representation of women (among others Hauser 1995; Siemieńska 2000; Janion 1996; Ritz, Binswanger, and Scheide 2000; Graff 2001; Ritz et al. 2001; Ostrowska 2004; A. Kramer 2005; Janion 2007). All authors agree that the personification of Poland as Polonia, and cultural image of Polish Mother/Mother the Pole embrace a conservative perspective on gender. For example, women’s role was to give birth to children (boys preferred), rear them and keep tradition alive, making the site of heterosexual family a nest of Polishness. Men, conversely, meant to fight for national freedom, ready to sacrifice their lives and their personal happiness (Walczevska 1999). In some strange (if not curiously twisted) way, the patriotic obligation to put the interest of the country above the personal, to make patriotism, a love of nation, a higher form of Love, made Poland not only a Mother, but also made Polonia a Lover (of her own sons) at the same time (since Polonia is represented as a young women in adoration by young man/soldier). Some kind of queer menagerie emerges here, some incestuous



prohibition is somehow brought upfront. *"Konrad Wallenrod"* (1991), an epic poem by Adam Mickiewicz (and icon of Polish Romanticism and patriotism) serves as an excellent example here. In this story, a young man leaves his wife and family, abandons personal happiness, and answers the call of Ultimate Love of the Country. Individual happiness in Mickiewicz's canonical text of Polish nationalism must be sacrificed (as much as the "concrete" and "bodily" wife and children) for the "greater sake" of national freedom, symbolism and idealism. Some feminist thinkers in Poland also see in this gesture of choosing the idealism of patriotism over the realism of domestic life, one root of contemporary conservative disregard of women's right to control their bodies and access to abortion (Szczuka 2004). Nonetheless the myth of Polish Mother/Mother the Pole strongly resonates with Polish religiosity, and especially with the cult of the Virgin Mary. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Motherhood has been framed by the ideal of Holy Mother as the holy activity, thus imposing the model of sacrificial holiness on women - a heroic mother of sons dying for their fatherland (or should we say motherland instead?). In consequence, Ostrowska (2004) uses the concept of "fantasmata" (originally developed by Maria Janion across her prolific oeuvre) to describe the Polish Mother/Mother the Pole, because "the oscillation of the Polish Mother/Mother the Pole between a myth and stereotype do not allow locating this symbolic figure neither in reality, nor in imaginary" (Ostrowska 2004, 218). There are numerous works of literature and other art forms where one is presented with such historical and cultural imaginary concerning gender roles. Among them, Vlastimil Hofman's painting *"Madonna with a Child and St. John"* (1909) may serve as a good exemple<sup>x</sup>. On the painting we see the Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother dressed up in Polish peasant's clothes, sitting with two boys in the middle of a field. The landscape is not characteristic of any particular place, and thus perhaps can also be said to be rather typical of the countryside in Poland.



Figure 1: Vlastimil Hofman, "Madonna with a Child and St. John" (1909).

The Holy Mother is represented as the beautiful Polish woman, and she is the symbol of holiness; gender roles and duties are once again re-inscribed on the female body through the equation of motherhood with sacredness. The consequences are ubiquitous and perhaps paradoxical. As Ewa Hauser (1995, 89) writes:

(...) in today's Poland the equation of Heavenly and Polish Mother continues as a model of double service for women to follow. This double service entails service to her family and, through the family, to Poland. Fulfilling this double service guarantees the woman a "double satisfaction" which she can obtain within the "domestic" sphere to which the Heavenly Servant-Mother of God destined her. Only through this service can a Polish woman attain an equivalent, though subordinate rank with the Polish male patriot. The Polish woman becomes the model of female patriotism through her role as a mother and by a systematic denial of her sexuality.

So far, what I have presented about the Polish constructions of gender and nation are not different to examples found in many other cultures (among others Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Chatterjee 1990; McClintock 1995; Lutz, Phoenix, and

Yuval-Davis 1995; Sharp 1996; Kaplan, Alarcón, and Moallem 1999), with one significant addition of religious figure of Virgin Mary. As the consequence, we observe not only the scarification of women, but also the nationalisation of the holy figure. Both conflate in the symbolic representation of the Polish nation.

How gender is intertwined into relation between the collectivity of a Polish nation and individualism of a person, can also be observed in a case of forgetting about women. The framing of gender along passive-active, domestic-public lines has erased the memory of real women taking part in real combat against different oppressors. This erasure occurs even (or perhaps especially) from the most important, nationally sacred moments in Polish history. Keeping in mind the significance of memory and forgetting in the construction of national narratives (introduced in the Chapter 3) two, I now turn again to Radkiewicz (2005). She shows how, for example the image of women during WWII was narrowed to nurses, telephone operators, and other types of supporters, despite well documented accounts of women fighting also in “active men’s roles” (soldiers, leaders, masterminds, etc.).

Another example is the history of the resistance movements in Poland, from which women are successively (and successfully) disaffiliated. For instance the Solidarity movement, which between 1980 and 1989 consisted of ten million people (Castle and Taras 2002, 56). Half of them were women, but the Solidarity is exclusively presented as a history of a couple of men. As two historical-sociological books about the topic show (Kondratowicz 2001; Penn 2005), it was often women who directly influenced crucial events from Solidarity’s history of struggle with the communist government. However, none of them is remembered or praised for their work in the movement, nor none made a political career out of this engagement, as their male colleagues did. So again, we see how the individual histories are dissolved in the narrative of the collective, and gender divisions remain in place. These two examples help the argument that if we begin with the examination of “failed remembering”, we may understand the politics of opposition and denial to feminism and lesbian and gay issues in contemporary

Poland. This also shed light on reasons why these groups demand inclusion into national imaginary and national narratives and discourses.

Let's move to another issue centred around the norms of the "ordinary" with the following three examples drawn from my own experiences. I was raised in the Polish countryside in a school where supposedly there were no Others, where the national is silently expressed in a pattern of choices made by young children rather than by any other official or pompous manifestation. If a boy was a dedicated football fan, he could have been perceived as worth making friends with. But if he were rather clumsy, then he would risk becoming the group's clown. But if, as it was in my case, he liked reading books – an activity supposedly not liked by boys and favoured by girls, so at least all teachers were telling us time and again – this boy would risk being bullied as the Other. Eventually, I was bullied as "sissy" for failing what had been seen as the norm of male adolescence. The second example is also the recollection from my junior years in the countryside school. There was a girl, the daughter of Jehovah Witnesses parents, and she also was the Other. Nobody in the school wanted to talk, play or be friends with her, because she was different (and thus somehow worse, somehow evil). (Difference being not attending the Church, i.e. the Catholic Church). Of course these were the attitudes of our parents and families, who were socialising us to believe that the girl who was not Catholic and the boy who did not play football but read books instead, that they were the odd ones out. Or the third instance: a woman in her forties, living in a countryside, who would have had her hair done regularly, not with permanent (hair treatment) though, but cut short, "boyish"-styled. This woman was one of the few that used to come in visit to our house. She was a friend of my mother, who herself was rather independent woman and did not care (that) much about other people's opinion (which by many in our village was seen as undesirable and suspicious quality of "female character"). People were avoiding making acquaintance with that woman, because she was called a "loose woman" for failing the rural standards of mature femininity.

What these three recollections have in common is a story of some eccentricity and failure in maintaining and fulfilling certain unspoken rules of “proper” gender and sexuality expression, or of a “proper” morality and values system. What we observe is a individual non-conformity to collectively accepted patterns of behaviour, which are site-specific. Social norms change from rural to urban setting, from western to eastern border, from one generation to another, etc. But as Michael Billig (1995) suggests in the opening pages of his book, it will be beneficial to frame these specificities as *national*, not only as society-specific or culture-specific (a labelling more common among social scientists) (Billig 1995, 8-9; see also Binnie 2004, 12). Billig insists on the *national* as a term that captures the universal and the particular, the general and the specific dimensions, something that adjectives societal or cultural (as too broad) are not able to capture. He also shows the pervasive character of the national influencing political, economic, social and cultural spheres of our everyday lives. It is a category to which other identities are often subdued (although this needs to be contextualised each time) due to the powerful and dominating force of national discourse. But it is important to remember that the national although discursively powerful, is in tight relation to other identify forming factors, as we learn from the intersectionality debates introduced in the Chapter 2. “National” then helps us to understand gender and sexuality not only as culturally marked sites of social behaviour, but as discursively framed and politically useful ideological instances of power and domination, resistance and struggle, negotiation and re-configuration.

So far I gave examples of how Catholicism and traditional formations of gender relate to collectivity and its predominance in Polish culture. I showed how religious and cultural norms suppress e.g. gender as the individual and personal expression, overlooking real people with symbolic (national) duties and representations. Therefore, I suggest that community (rather than individuality) was of greater importance in the construction of Polishness. Understanding the primacy of collectivity in Polish nationhood and its pre-1989 political ideologies is crucial in comprehending the post-1989 social shift. If we agree that liberal

democracy and neoliberal capitalism as political and economic regimes rely on individualism and Western liberal and secularised political ideological models of polity and “sovereignty” (Heywood 2003), the inevitable clash and tension between the rooted traditional approaches and the new political and economic realities seems almost inevitable. It is in these tensions where I would (hypothetically for now) locate and embed the restlessness and strain between the discourse of nationhood and homosexuality.

The above discussion of gender in the Polish context shows in my opinion an unspoken (and one could say: queer) presence of erotic tension between male hero/soldier, fatherland personified as Polonia (becoming motherland?), an idealised and seductive woman, and an absently present real woman, perhaps soldier’s wife, pushed aside in the shadows of symbolic Mother Poland. Polonia figures as a mother, a national body whose sons are obliged to defend the country’s chastity against the aggressor (a de-sexualised mother-son relation). But the personification of Polonia is at the same time excessively sexualised and erotic, often represented as a young and fleshy woman. Hers is a seductive “follow me” call, which the soldier is not able to/should not refuse (a lover-lover relation). We find examples in the paintings of the prominent Polish painter Jacek Malczewski (1854-1929).

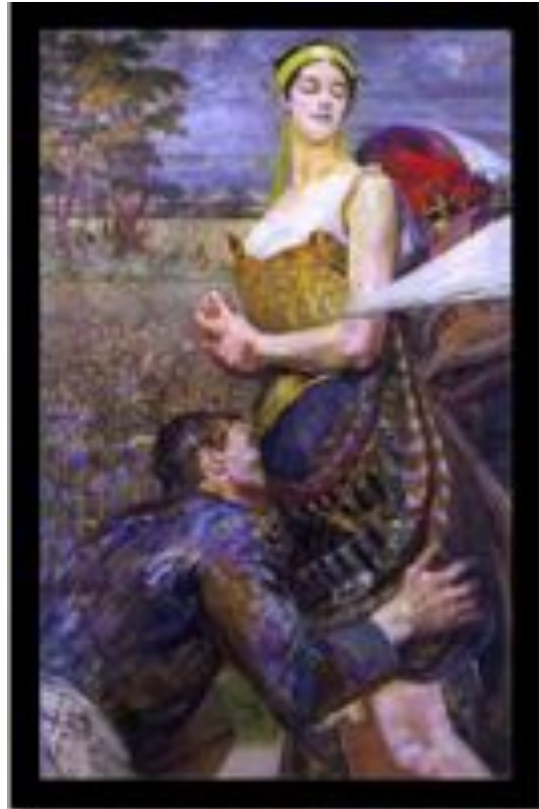


Figure 2: Jacek Malczewski, "Polonia" (1914)



Figure 3: Jacek Malczewski, "Polonia" (1914)

In Figure 2 we see Polonia as a young woman, rather dominating the frame of representation, with a calm if somewhat “uninterested” facial expression. She is a woman that a man (Pole) cannot refuse - he submits to her, kneeling in front of her. At the same time, it is not just a ritual kneeling in awaiting of – for example - a blessing, there is some queer erotic tension in this painting. The man seems to be kissing the womb of Polonia, the sacred origin; it looks like he might be pleasing her with cunnilingus. However, Polonia as depicted in Maczewski’s painting seems rather indifferent to the man’s act of submission and pleasing. It is as if it was expected of him, as if it was his duty. Yet again we could read into this painting the relation of a mistress and slave, domination and submission, and pronounce it queer. But this is not the point. What is important is Maczewski’s ability to capture the tautness and edginess of meanings in all their abundance; he enables a possibility of multiple (if queer) readings of the relationship between sexuality and gender, nationhood, and their discourses and representations.

In the next painting (Figure 3) we see a different, yet similar, scenario. Here we see Polonia not as a proud and domineering woman, but as the flirtatious and irresistible one. In this male fantasy depiction, Polonia plays a game of unavailable and ashamed girl (crossed hands symbolising “oh no, how could I ever...”). But at the same time, she is coquettish: she has got her dress lifted up above the knee, so that a leg is shown, she smiles in turning her head towards the boy behind, as if she was telling “Yes, do follow me...”. Polonia allures the boy, who seems unable to refuse the temptation. It is again the face, his not hers this time, that suggests that. The boy’s facial expression is rather blunt, he seems to be “unpresent”, as if he was almost unconsciously animated by her call to follow. In both paintings Polonia is depicted in a sexualised way, and represented as a lover. Yet at the same time, Polonia was/is figured as a Mother Poland in the national imaginary. She is The Holy Mother/Mother of those Polish sons who will go and fight for her, and also the young woman who seduces them in an incestual lure of idealised Love. She is the one to which the love and respect of “real” women will be sacrificed. What is outside the frame is the taken-for-grantedness



of the heterosexual family where real women and men, marry and procreate, to secure the survival of the hindered nation (a wife-husband relation).

So when we think about nationhood and sexuality (in Poland and perhaps elsewhere as well), this is appearing as perhaps a little odd *ménage à trois*, a love affair between women, men (both symbolic and real) and the country/nation. This triangulation of desire which is much at the expense of women redirects my attention to the issue of homosociality, introduced in Chapter 4. There is a particularly intense relation between homoeroticism, homosexuality, homosociality and homophobia in the national discourses. National homosocial bonding of men is founded on homophobic exclusion and stigmatisation. However, although homosexuality is stigmatised and despised, homoerotic tension is never absent from the most heterosexual settings and imaginaries of nationhood. Iza Kowalczyk, a prominent feminist art theoretician, in the article entry "*National eroticism*" (2010) presents a series of Vlastimil Hofman's paintings, stating that there is something unsettling in his patriotic depictions of (naked) men/soldiers and Polonia.



Figure 4: Vlastimil Hofman, "Polonia and Polish Soldier", ca. 1915

Kowalczyk concludes that although eroticism in the patriotic depictions of national anthems may not be shocking (perhaps because we are so used to it, thanks to its widespread occurrence?), a “national homoeroticism” is at least surprising (Kowalczyk 2010). Vlastimil Hofman’s “Polonia and Polish Soldier” (ca. 1915) is a good example here. A half-naked, porcelain-pale Polonia is looking at the naked Polish soldier. He is a well suntanned, small built man and we are presented with a view of him from behind, while Polonia seems to look at his torso and crotch. The depiction is surprising, because as we know, thanks to the feminist critique of visual culture (e.g. Erens 1990; Smelik 1998; Petro 2002), the gaze of the onlooker is framed as predominantly male and possessive. Thus depictions of naked women are taken for granted in contemporary heteronormative cultures we live in, while representations of male nudity, inevitably eroticising the male body, and forcing a homoerotic gaze on the onlooker, is seen as disquieting and provoking. Additionally, the soldier’s posture is rather stereotypically effeminate. While bending the left hand, he puts the right one on his hip; slightly bending the right leg, he makes his hip to delicately move to the left. And although we do not know what his eyes are looking at, we notice that his head is straight looking in the direction of Polonia’s face. We could say then that he does not seem to be interested in her semi-naked body, that her erotic allure does not influences him. Hofman’s painting of this erotic, libidinal connection between Poland and her sons/lovers, redirects us to (if not forces us to acknowledge) the homosocial and homoerotic restlessness of national discourses. Additionally, the “national homoeroticism” is seasoned in Hofman’s painting with a touch of religious symbolism (not surprising perhaps, if we consider what I have written earlier in the chapter about the inevitable connection between Catholicism and Polishness). Polonia holds in her hands some sort of crosier depicting a Black Madonna, and the Soldier holds an orb that resembles *globus cruciger* - choices of insignia that read as significant. The Black Madonna Of Chestochowa is a popular and easily recognisable symbol of Polish Catholicism and of the Polish fight for independence (from the times of the Polish - Swedish

wars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; it is an image much popularised by Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz in his "Trilogy" works). The *globus cruciger* is a symbol of royal sovereignty and power. Thus both insignias hint at Poland's lost sovereignty and re-inscribe the motif of national fight into the eroticised/erotic (if a little queer) depiction of Polish nationhood. Homoeroticism silently haunts those patriotic portrayals of an already unsettled menagerie. Parker et al. in their introduction to "*Nationalisms and Sexualities*" (1992, 6-7) write that

[i]n the rhetorical system(...) women are predictably enshrined as The Mother, a "trope of ideal femininity, a fantasmatic female that secures male-male arrangements and an all make history". This idealisation of motherhood by the virile fraternity would seem to entail the exclusion of all nonreproductively-oriented sexualities from the discourse of the nation.

However, this appears to be non-achievable effort, and the homoeroticism seems never to be completely eradicated. Moreover, Janion (2007) indicates additional twist in the Polish case: a state non-existence, hence the popular representation of Polonia as a dead body. However, the dead body of the Mother Poland is most often shown as young Polonia, as a dead lover (2007, 272-273). Therefore, Janion concludes, Mother-Poland-Fatherland-Polonia is predominantly a tanatic figure. In some queer way, Hofman's (but also Malczewski's) depictions of Polonia although aiming at ideal, pure love of country, turn somehow to be seasoned with incestuous, forbidden extra-marital, and homoerotic, deathly spices of (Polish) national ghosts and worst nightmares. We deal here with the Otherness in multiple embodiments (or in-corporations) and re-configurations, with porous and possibly unstable associations ascribed to its meanings. Once again the work of Jarred Hayes (2000) comes to mind, when he writes:

[o]ne cannot exclude someone from the Nation unless she is already there. (...) If there must be such an effort to exclude the queer from the Nation (...) and show she is an outsider trying to invade, the queer must always be inside already; that is, in some ways, the Nation is always already queer (Hayes 2000, 15-16).

Perhaps this is why silence around sexuality became the predominant form of discourse in Polish culture (Ritz 2002). German Ritz points to cultural differences between Poland and Western Europe and America, where “sexual revolution” bears marks of urban cultures (sexuality as a Western middle-class commodity). Polish society did not follow the same social processes of modernisation as present in Western societies. Ritz claims that Polish modernism is mostly connected to the post-WWII socialist project of socialist realism (sorealism) - the building of a new country and new society - until then “issues of gender and discrimination were shaded by the general claims of nation and ideology” (Ritz 2002, 53). Perhaps now is the place to discuss gender and sexuality during the communist period in more detail.

Further in his book, Ritz continues: “[r]eal socialism as ideology and specific political pragmatics was suspicious of any form of otherness; therefore here sexual emancipation is a black spot on the map of [Polish] culture. There was no room for sexual otherness” (2002, 54). Primacy was again given to the collective body of the citizenry, and heterosexuality was present as an implicit rule (reproduction as the key duty on the way to re-build the country/nation after the war). There is an extensive literature about women and gender relations during and after communism (e.g. Funk and Mueller 1993; Domsch and Ladwig 2000; Gal and Kligman 2000; Jahnert and et al. 2001; Frunza and Vacarescu 2004; J. E. Johnson and Robinson 2007; Kay 2007). All authors highlight that although communist governments tried to re-model traditions of genders, their roles, constructions and understanding, the project only partially succeeded. Certain advances were achieved in Poland, like availability of abortion, an increase in childcare facilities and a greater influx of women into “professional” workspaces. Nonetheless, communist “state feminism” fell short of the liberation idea(lism) (Domsch and Ladwig 2000; Siemieńska 2000; Goscilo and Holmgren 2006). It overloaded women with a double burden of domestic and professional careers, the political domain remained exclusively male-oriented; compulsory heterosexuality and the nation-building project of socialist realism were far from sexual liberation.

In terms of policies towards homosexuality, there was no space for sexual otherness in communist Poland (but of course it does not deny its existence in informal, or “underground” spaces). However, unlike – for example - Russia/USSR, it was not criminalised either, (Healey 2001; Baer 2002; 2009). Particularly interesting in this context may be fact that the so called “sodomy laws” were never part of Polish penal codes, which they were in so many other countries (in the “West” and elsewhere). However, this should not be attributed to greater tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality in Poland (see also Szulc 2011). Lack of “sodomy laws” in Polish penal codes is the effect of the troubled history of the (non-)existing Polish state, rather than of anything else. After 1795, that is during the partition period, specific laws of the occupying countries (which, like Prussia, had sodomy laws in force) were operating on the territory of (non-existing) Poland. In 1932 a final unification of all legal systems on the new territory of the Second Polish Republic was undertaken. The new Polish penal code introduced at the time did not contain any type of “sodomy law” interpellations. The absence of legal punishment of homosexuality in the new territory of Poland was an effect of more general political choices of the interwar period, not the effect of public discussion or a reflection of public opinion. Rather than trying to patch up all three legal systems into one single system after independence, it was decided to scrap them and use the Napoleonic Code as the foregrounding base of the new Polish legal system. And since there was nothing about homosexuality (sodomy) in that code, homosexuality was never penalized in Poland.

Such a state of affairs concerning homosexuality persisted during the communist period (Kurpios 2003; 2010). In trying to understand why this was so, especially in relation to (for example) Russia/USSR where, after the initial relaxation in the early Bolshevik years, homosexuality was re-criminalised under Stalin’s rule (Healey 2012), we should perhaps look for the reasons in the particularities of Polish communist governance. In no difference to other Western European and Northern American countries, homosexuality in Poland was the subject of criminological and psychological studies during the 1960s until 1980s.

Such studies in Communist Poland (and other Central and Eastern European countries) presented homosexuality as a social pathology from the “West” threatening the young, healthy, socialist “new order”. But of course the reverse analogy was also to be found on the other side of the wall. For example, in the United States during the so-called McCarthy era, homosexuality was equated with communism and hunted down as a threat to the national security (and “Western” order) (Blasius and Phelan 1997). Not much is known about the life of non-heterosexual people in Poland after the WWII until 1989 though (Kluszczynski 2001; Kurpios 2003; 2010; Szulc 2011). One of the very few documented (if in a scattered and rather elusive manner) “events” of the period was the so-called Action Hyacinth - a militia’s (communist police) surveillance operation to infiltrate male homosexual communities in larger towns and cities, executed between 1985 and 1987. This operation came to public attention for the first time in 2004 and again in 2007. It gathered some mainstream media attention, when some of the Warsaw-based LGBT activists tried to find out what had happened to approximately 12,000 “pink files” gathered during the Hyacinth operation (for more details see the following articles: Polska Agencja Prasowa 2004; Boguszewicz 2007; Stachowiak 2007; innastrona.pl 2007; Tomasik 2009). The general lack of information about non-heterosexual lives in Poland before 1989 should, among other factors, be attributed to the fact that academic scholarship in Poland in the field of gender and sexuality is still relatively young and has grown since that time (especially in comparison to the “Western” Anglo-American history). There is also the structure and organisation of academia, and its relative conservatism. Finally, one should not forget about research funding which is impacted by state economic circumstances as research is often state funded (directly or indirectly); in times of “transformation” there is often a general pauperisation of society, deployment of economic austerity measures, and consequently less money for humanities and socio-cultural research. Huge disparities in the exchange value of money between Central and Eastern European countries and “Western” countries, also means that there is a severe restriction in terms of cross-fertilisation of theories and exchange of ideas (facilitated by e.g.

electronic access to journals, or the possibility to buy books). Perhaps it is due to these factors that most scholars in Poland tend to adopt the role of translators and intermediates between English-speaking scholarship and a Polish-speaking audience. They tend to introduce the concepts of the predominantly Anglo-American research, but what is noteworthy is the attention given by many authors to the possibilities and constraints of cultural translation. Hence, as Mizielińska and I have pointed out elsewhere, gender and sexuality studies in Poland and CEE did not develop in a linear-accumulative manner as did earlier in American and British academe (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011a; see also: Basiuk, Ferens, and Sikora 2002; Ferens, Basiuk, and Sikora 2006; Mizielińska 2006; 2010). It is worth highlighting here my contribution to sexuality studies in/about Poland and Central and Eastern Europe, since a survey of existing research concerning homosexuality and nationhood shows that there has been no in-depth debate in Polish (nor in the English-speaking) academic circles about the important relationship between Polish nationalism and homosexuality.

## **5.4 Mapping the Other: Poland between the “West” and the “East”**

As I argued in Chapter 2, every process of identity building is a relationship between the Self and the Other. In Chapter 3, I indicated that national identity is no different since nations also need their Others to constitute themselves in relation to. These could be “radical Others” remaining outside the borders, such as neighbour nations; or “constitutive Others”, remaining within the body of nation, but perceived as constitutively alien. In the Polish case, I explain these in attitudes towards Germans, Russians and Jews, through Poland’s unique location between the “East” and the “West”. Drawing maps and fixing locations are crucial practices in establishing and maintaining power hierarchies and possibilities for collective agency (Huggan 1989). For example, I analyse elsewhere how the use of the “West” and the “Central and Eastern Europe” may serve to impede or distort the current (im)balance between more dominant “West” and less privileged “East” (Kulpa 2012b; 2012a; Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011a). According to many

scholars, in the context of Polish nationhood, the geographical location of the centre, between Germany and Russia, “West” and “East”, was of a special importance (Kostrzewa 1990; Walicki 1994a; Jedlicki 1999; Janion 2007). This was sharply summarised by Polish satirist Andrzej Mleczko with the following cartoon:



Figure 5: Copyright by Andrzej Mleczko.

The image shows us God ordering the world. When it comes to Poland, God says (in a somewhat cheeky and playful manner, judging from his facial expression): “Let us make fun of Poles, and locate them between Germany and Russia”. I consider this to be sharp and accurate summary of Polish resentment towards its neighbours. Throughout the centuries Poles struggled to find their own way



between oriental and occidental cultural influences; Poles feel inferior to the “West”, and superior to the “East” (Lipski 1990, 59; Szrett 1990, 37–38). Jan Jozef Lipski (1990), a well-known Polish intellectual, critiques this duality of the “Polish soul”, calling it grotesque and pitiful (1990, 60). In recognition that there is no us without them, Jozef Szrett states that “[i]t is in our interest to liberate ourselves [Poles] from oppression by others, and at the same time liberate ourselves from resentments and complexes” (1990, 38). This, in turn, would enable the re-evaluation of national identity. Lipski postulates even more, and writes that “[p]atriotism is not only respect and love for tradition; it is also the relentless selection and discarding of elements in this tradition, and an obligation to this intellectual task” (1990, 54). That means not only leaving the past and complexes behind, as Szrett suggests, but actively dealing with own ghosts of this past, facing the challenge of the Other by the recognition of the Other within ourselves. I will return to this last point in Chapter 7, where I will engage again with the Polish national identifications from the perspective of attachment and belonging.

#### **5.4.1 Martyrs and victims - memory and Polish nation**

To suggest the linkage between everyday lives and the narrative constructedness of national identities is to talk about a “place” and “space” as both occupying the spheres of the “real” and the “imagined”. Research about Poland and “post-communism” clearly indicate place (geographical as much as imagined) and time as foundational dimensions. Allan and Thompson (1999) and Bhabha (2004) effectively argue that “time-space” are inextricable from each other, and that one of the more interesting processes of creating/imagining the nationhood, “the people”, is to translate one onto the other. In Bhabha’s own words:

[t]he difference of space returns as the Sameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition, turning the People into One. The liminal point of this ideological displacement is the turning of the differentiated spatial boundary, the ‘outside’, into the authenticating ‘inward’ time of Tradition (2004, 213).

Perhaps now is the time to explore Polish nationalism and its attitude to Otherness through such temporal categories of narration. As mentioned above,

19<sup>th</sup> c. Romanticism is the period when Polish nationalism is conceived, and this is very much thanks to Romantic literature (Janion 2000). Writings of the bards of the period, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Slowacki, Zygmunt Krasinski and Cyprian Kamil Norwid, were the vessels of narrating the nation, setting themselves the task of “waking up the people’s soul”. They have created and helped to transmit the memory of “Poland” for the so-called Great Emigration of Polish noblemen fleeing out of the country after the failed November Insurrection of 1830-1831. The Romantic love of folk stories, myths, fairytales and legends inspired poets “to go between the people” with the mission of writing down their stories. But as we know today, this often led to “improving” and thus in fact, to creating new narrations, rather than just simply writing the existing ones down (Witkowska 1997; Janion and Żmigrodzka 2001). Therefore the work of Polish Romantic bards is another good case of what Hobsbawm and Ranger call “inventing traditions” (1984).

What I want to focus on now, is a process that could be understood as “othering selfhood” - how Polish martyrological narration constructs Poland as the good, sacred and sacrificed Other against the backdrop of other, supposedly rotten, evil and corrupted countries (notably Germany and Russia). It was the idea that Poland, as the Christ of the Nations, was predestined to be sacrificed (portioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria), in order to free the Peoples of Europe for the self-determined prophecy of national sovereignty (Walicki 2006). As indicated earlier, the Messianic ideology reinforced the primacy of the collective over the individual. This took various shapes, mainly the form of fighting with a (real or imagined) oppressor. How one would define it – whether as an invader, occupier or political opposition, is not so important. The stress was on the duty to give up one’s personal life and happiness in the name of The Polish Nation (Janion 2000, 24). It was also about a fight for independence and struggle for survival, cultural as much as political. Martyrology propagates the narration of injustice and victimhood in the national ego (Zieliński 2002, 18). Finally, it can be argued that thanks to this martyrological feature of national ideology,

[t]he defining feature of a nation thus conceived was not ethnicity, but the historic mission that this nation was supposed to fulfil. As Brian Porter argued, “the Polish nationalists of the nineteenth century enacted the nation rather than embodying it (...) (Auer 2004, 61).

This would suggest and support the claim that nation and nationalism are performative ideas/practices, relying on the action, process, and relation, rather than on any supposedly fixed and stable attachments (cf. Chapter 3). So to summarise, Polish martyrological discourses of the 19th century shows us not only the interesting process of “inward othering” (constructing Polish national self as the “better Other” of the oppressor countries), but also provide another example of the domination of collective over the individual.

#### **5.4.2 Poland as colonizer**

Finally, Polish relations with its neighbouring Others should be studied not only from the perspective of victim but also that of oppressor. To do so, the use of post-colonial theories in Polish context is a fascinating academic enterprise, opening many new possibilities of scholarship (Janion 2007). The ethnic diversity of The Commonwealth of the Poland and Lithuania of the pre-partition period (until 1795) and the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) was significant. As Krystyna Romaniszyn states: “[t]he ethnic mosaic comprised Ukrainians, Jews, Belarussians, Germans, plus smaller numbers of Lithuanians, Russians, Slovaks, Czechs, Tatars, Roma, and folk populations identifying themselves as ‘indigenous’” (2005, 160). Overall, minorities constituted more than 30 per cent of the total population of the interwar population (Dylągowa 2000, 143–144). Consequently, “Polish culture” was a melange of these multiethnic, multilingual, multi-religious roots, bonded together by the civic political idea(lism)s of unity (Walicki 1997, 233). A melange not always of own good will. What I want to stress in these paragraphs, is that Poland was not only the object of a colonial dominance (by three aggressors partitioning its territory; and later by USSR after WWII) as it is most commonly conceived - but also a fact that Poland was a coloniser itself. Figure 7 represents “Polish” territory changes from before and after WWII.



Figure 6: Poland after WW II (Image source: Wikipedia<sup>xi</sup>)

The salmon-coloured western territories are called in Polish “ziemie odzyskane” - “restored/regained lands”, whereas the grey ones - “ziemie utracone” - “lost lands”. The “lost lands” are today’s Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. Polish past orientalisising and colonising attitudes towards these lands are not only well documented (see: Janion 2007 for a particularly acute and detailed overview of literature about Polish attitudes towards “Kresy”/ziemie utracone), but also present in contemporary language. In the standard expression, like “to go to Germany” (“jechać *do* Niemiec”), a preposition ‘do’ - ‘to’ is used. However, when the same sentence refers to one of the “lost lands”, a different preposition of place is used: ‘na’ (“jechać *na* Ukrainę/Białoruś/Litwę”). It implies possessiveness and is used in an action when a subject does something to/on an object that is in their possession - a connotation that is not present in the standard ‘do’ preposition. It is also common to talk about Poland while discussing The

Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania - a two-nation state between 1569-1795. It is best exemplified when referring to the already mentioned Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz. Although he was born, lived, and self-described as Lithuanian, he is referred to as Pole. Equally telling is the treatment of his canonical *“Master Thaddeus, or the Last Lithuanian Foray: A Nobleman's Tale from the Years of 1811 and 1812 in Twelve Books of Verse”* (2006), an epic poem, fragments of which every child has to learn by heart in the Polish primary school. The work has Lithuania (and not Poland) in the title, and begins with three references to Lithuania from the very start:

Lithuania, my country! You are as good health:  
How much one should prize you, he only can tell  
Who has lost you. Your beauty and splendour I view  
And describe here today, for I long after you.

Holy Virgin who shelters our bright Cześćstochowa  
And shines in Ostra Brama! You, who yet watch over  
The castled Nowogródek's folk faithful and mild; (...)  
(Mickiewicz 2006).

Yet still, Lithuania is scrupulously erased and denied sovereignty, constantly being subsumed under the category of Poland and Polishness. Taking inspiration from post-colonial writings, and doing this by looking at one of the examples of the Polish imperialism, I tried to give another example of othering present in the Polish culture. The final one - Polish relations to Jewish people, follows.

### **5.4.3 Poles and Jews - forgotten past**

The Jewish minority before WWII consisted of approx. one-third of the 30% of the population considered as ethnic minority (Dylagowa 2000, 143-44). However, the position of Jewish people seemed to be more “problematic” than that of any other minority group. They represented an Otherness that is/was more radical (involving cultural, ethnic and religious difference) as definitive of their community. They were an ethnic group without their own state until 1948, and not without controversy ever since, remaining for many years the largest minority within the national borders. However, the Jewish community was also extensively

assimilated, blurring the clear-cut difference between “being Polish” and “not-being Polish”. Anti-Semitism as the key element of Polish nationalism came into significance with the building of the Second Republic during the interwar period (Auer 2004, 62). The figure of Roman Dmowski is a particularly clear example of this link. As a leader of *Endecja* (National Democracy), an important (nationalist) party, he expressed extreme forms of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in his work to re-build (“pure”) Polish nation-state (Auer 2004, 63). It is safe to state then, that in the process of building national identity, anti-Semitism played a (shamefully) important role, not without the support from the Catholic Church (Chrypinski 1989; Blobaum 2005; Geneviève Zubrzycki 2006). Unfortunately, anti-Semitism seems to be a persistent trait of Polishness until present day<sup>xii</sup>.

The accounts of Polish-Jewish relations bear as well, and unfortunately, a mark of competitiveness over victimhood. The anti-Semitic trait is visible in Polish national claims for martyrological suffering as the Christ of Nations. An attempt to establish the “hierarchy of suffering” (Roszkowski quoted in Auer 2004, 67) is analyzed by Zubrzycki, who looked at the 1998 events around mounting Christian crosses at the site of the Nazi death camp in Auschwitz. These expressions of “Polish jealousy over the Shoah” try to diminish the significance of the suffering of Jewish people, and elevate their own perceived harm. However grotesque it may seem, this attitude also has fatal consequences.

What seems to play the most important role in the relations between two peoples is not only fear (and hate) but also memory and its lack. Forgetting, as discussed in the Chapter 3, plays a crucial role in the formation of national self. In Poland, it is forgetting about Polish crimes against Jewish people: forgetting about the extent of Polish collaboration with the Nazis during WWII, or the mass killings of the Jewish population in Jedwabne (Gross 2001; 2006; Jankowski 2002) which serve as horrific examples. The best illustration of this “intended forgetting” are the responses to Jan T. Gross’s uncompromising work about Polish-Jewish relations. The amount of hateful rejections, accusations, and controversies that swamped Polish public opinion after the publication of *“Neighbours”* (2001) and *“Fear”* (2006) indicates that any attempt to break the silence and talk about Polish

anti-Semitism after WWII provokes stormy rage (Jankowski 2002; Polonsky and Michlic 2004; Gross 2007). This just confirms how strongly the topic remains taboo, and how important it is to expose those blind spots in the national memory.

Finally, there are recently new analyses of Polish anti-Semitism in the context of homophobia. Some writers (Umińska 2006; Ostolski 2007; Graff 2008) point towards the fact that there is a parallel between Jews and gay people in their sacrificial role served up on the altar of Polish national anxieties. These authors claim that homophobia is the 21st century anti-Semitism. The metaphor may be useful, if hopefully exaggerated. However, even though issues of homophobia and anti-Semitism in Polish context may seem similar, rooted in xenophobia, they still encompass many different problems, and thus must not be taken without criticism and careful re-assessment.

## 5.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have introduced the cultural and historical context necessary for understanding the analytical engagement in the next three chapters. I have signalled the dominance of the collectivity in the formation of Traditional Polishness, when looking at the role of the Catholic Church, and the cultural formations of gender and sexuality. Also various ways of producing Otherness in national discourses and practices were scrutinised. From the aggressive “outer Others” (Germany and Russia), through threatening “inner Others” (Jews), to Others as subject of conquer (neighbouring eastern borderlands, today’s Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine), to producing martyrological Other Self in the figure of Poland as the victimised Christ of Nations. I suggest that these figures may be of importance when analysing the relationship between national self and Otherness (especially homosexuality) after 1989.

It seems to me that the categories of memory, remembering, and forgetting play particular role in conceptualising the Polish nationhood. The operating mechanisms of national memory are not only visible at a macro level of e.g. Polish-Jewish relations (forgetting), but also at micro level of memory replication

(remembering). One of the most important sites of memory transmission is the institution of the (extended) family. It was this micro-location and diffusion of cultural values between three or more generations that played a crucial role in the formation of Polish cultural memory. Literary texts - a work of imagination, during 123 years of political non-existence, became containers of memory, which were redistributed among family members, unfolding their extended conjugations, spreading in communities. But these works of Romantic imagination not only substituted for the lack of the "real", they have actually become seen as "the real".

So another conclusion about Polish nationhood we may draw is that as time goes by, and the boundaries between the discursive creation and material reality, between the imagined of the nation and the real of its state, get blurred and distorted; the past of the "real" and the present of the "imagined" become one in national memory. The performative technologies of nationhood produce their own aporias, making the object of national craving, the "real" of the nation, impossible to distinguish from the "imagined" of one's own desire. Undistinguishable as triple siblings, national past, present, and future collapse into one, performative geo-temporal The Nation. It is the act when memory/past become hope/future.



## ***Chapter 6***

### ***State discourses***

The contemporary relation(ship)s between the discourses of nation and homosexuality are without doubt a manifold and complex. In the previous chapter I indicated the important role played by the nation-state and the role of Otherness in the historical and cultural formation of Polishness. Furthermore, the prevailing importance of the state in discussions about nationhood became apparent. But this national obsession with the state is hardly unique to Poland, since it is one of the major features of any national ideology (Breuilly 1993). A state is a spatially and geographically delimited unit that actually, yet symbolically, demarcates the nation(s), providing boundaries, thus helping to constitute a national identity. In a sense, it could be said that a state is the materialisation of a nation, of the "imagined community" of "people". Consequently, "nation-state" is one of the most taken-for-granted compounds, suggesting an intrinsic connection between the two elements. Still, we should be reluctant in substituting one with another; since they are not synonymous, the presumed equivalency is more than problematic (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989, 3).

The main focus of this chapter is centred on the following question: How is homosexuality framed by national discourse, as performed by the nation-state? Of the plethora of examples that could be used to answer it, I have chosen (former president of Poland) Lech Kaczynski's National Address speech (17.03.2008) (Prezydent RP 2008), contextualised in resolutions of the Polish Sejm (lower chamber of the Parliament) (2003; 2006). The Sejm and the office of the president are two major state institutions, hence serve here as (non-exclusive) examples of state practices/discourses. It is noteworthy that the nation and the figure of the homosexual are mediated in these state discourses in tight relation to the European Union (EU). There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, because the EU is an institutional actor that plays a significant role in Polish international and domestic politics. Secondly, because although it operates on and through the state

level, it develops discursive practices and policies operating in the sphere of ideologies and values, hence necessarily impacting on the culture and sphere of the nationhood. Thirdly, because the EU specifically addresses issues of gender and (homo)sexuality in its politics that have a direct impact on the individual member-states. In the following paragraphs I will argue that homosexuality and nationhood are relational and co-dependant discourses almost to the point where one seems impossible without the other (Other). I stress the interplay of gender, maps, geography, and sovereignty as organising principles of this relation(ship).

## **6.1 Polish Parliament's resolutions from 2003 and 2006**

In recent Polish history, not only the year 1989 but also that of 2004 stand as significant. That 2004 year could be read as the final answer to the centuries-long national debate (and anxiety) shown in the previous chapter about Poland belonging to the “West” (or alternatively, the “East”). But at the moment of its inclusion into the “West”, the EU enlargement could also be read as problematic from the point of view of the newly "regained" state's sovereignty. It has to be remembered that since 1999, Poland as a so called “candidate country”, was obliged to adjust its laws to those set in EU's *Acquis Communautaire* which represents a body of existing and constantly adjusting regulations, which set up the supposed core of the EU. As we can deduct from the following definition, its reach has the potential to go well beyond – and in many cases does go beyond – the sphere of international affairs, impacting on home affairs, social and cultural life. We read:

Acquis communautaire:

This is a French term meaning, essentially, 'the EU as it is' – in other words, the rights and obligations that EU countries share. The 'acquis' includes all the EU's treaties and laws, declarations and resolutions, international agreements on EU affairs and the judgments given by the Court of Justice. It also includes action that EU governments take together in the area of 'justice and home affairs' and on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. 'Accepting the acquis' therefore means taking the EU as you find it. Candidate countries have to accept the 'acquis' before they can join the EU, and make EU law part of their own national legislation<sup>xiii</sup>.

Although it may seem that the EU stance on issues relating to national cultures and traditions is that of non-intervention, the picture is more complicated. For example, although EU regulatory bodies have no intention of regulating across all member states (e.g. women's rights to safe and informed abortion), there are nevertheless certain policies that do intervene into national social values. For example, EU Directives on: equal treatment with the focus on gender (2006/54/EC), on the racial equality (2000/48/EC), and on equal treatment in employment and occupation, with a focus on religion, belief, sexuality, disability and age (2000/78/EC). In this light, it is perhaps not surprising that attitudes towards the EU in Poland, especially from the more conservative sides, have been mixed and sceptical (as they were and are in many other countries, of course). The 2003 Polish Sejm resolution "about the sovereignty of Polish law in the subject of morality and culture" is an example of just such uneasiness arising. The fact that it is probably the shortest ever parliamentary resolution - it consists only of one sentence - also highlights the importance of the fear and uncertainty experienced by Polish MPs, who felt the need to have such a resolution passed. It reads:

Heading towards the integration with other European countries within the structures of the European Union, and in the face of the referendum about Polish membership in the Union, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland declares that Polish law concerning the moral order of the social life, the dignity of the family, marriage and upbringing, and the protection of life - is [and shall be] by no means restricted by the international regulations (Sejm RP 2003).

In its declarative character, the resolution has no binding legal effects and remains a rhetorical tool. The pre-accession resolution tells us about the presence of the fear, a sense of possible clash and tensions, arising between the Polish (nation-) state and the supra-national organisation, in the matter of values and attitudes. Specifically, we learn that the "moral order of social life, the dignity of the family, marriage and upbringing, and the protection of life" might be under siege by the forces coming with, from, and as, the EU. To decode this bundle of references,

one needs to keep in mind a particular vocabulary developed in Poland, in relation to the body, sex, gender, and sexuality. This is the religiously influenced and morally charged language of "values", which according to many scholars was and continues to be one of the major obstacles in advancing certain gender-related reforms and policies (Graff 2001; A.-M. C. Kramer 2003; Goscilo and Holmgren 2006). The early 1990s "abortion debate" that resulted in passing a very severe anti-abortion law in 1993 also shaped the public language in a distinct way. So in public debates the following words are veiled, or not seen to be in use: 'pregnancy termination', 'abortion', 'foetus', 'sperm and egg', 'sexuality', 'reproductive rights', or 'women'. Instead the expressions used were/are: 'killing of unborn children', 'genocide' and 'murdering the unborn'; 'unborn children'; 'life'; 'creation of life'; 'motherhood'; 'blessed with a gift of giving life'/'mothers' vs. 'murderesses'. Such discourse is not only essentially and characteristically conservative, but it is virtually spread across the whole range of political ideologies, actors, and other instances, from Right to Left (Graff 2001; Kramer 2003; Szczuka 2004). In such a context, the resolution's passage about the "moral order of social life, the dignity of the family, marriage and upbringing, and the protection of life" is in fact an expression of fear of non-Catholic/non-religious values and ethical orders, in particular of attitudes to homosexuality and same-sex relationships, as well as women's rights to reproductive control.

Additionally, Agnieszka Graff (2009), in her analysis of the major Polish weeklies from the period of around EU enlargement (Spring 2004), notices intensified "gender talk". She concludes:

My argument about this material was that the conservative discourse about gender was linked to anxiety about national identity, an anxiety caused by the European Union accession. (...) I argue that the obsessive "gender talk" of this period is best understood as displaced narrative about national identity; an effort to contain ambivalence about change and construct a notion of Polishness stable enough to accommodate, or perhaps even outweigh, European Union accession (Graff 2009, 140–141).

The 2003 Sejm's resolution is therefore an example of wider social, cultural and political anxieties about the "new era" in Polish history. Recalling arguments from the previous chapter, the significance of the historical, cultural, political, and geographical location "in-between" the "East" and the "West" as one of the major components of the Polish national mythology, the joining of a pan-European (but significantly "Western"), supranational organisation with a clear agenda of becoming (one of) the most powerful institutions in the contemporary world, must have necessarily given rise to anxieties. Interestingly, these anxieties about "sovereignty of the state and nation" are formulated around issues of bodies, gender, and sexuality, rather than, as one might expect, the military, economy, or governance. This of course provides further arguments suggesting that the process of "gendering the nation", outlined in the previous chapter, is not only symptomatic of the pre-1989 period in the Polish history, but also persists after that date. In this chapter, I want to argue that we can also observe a process of "sexualisation of the nation", and that "homosexuality" is becoming one of the key figures in the national imagination.

In the 2003 resolution, the sovereignty of the Polish state was expressed through its cultural and moral integrity, which would be one of continuing to express its difference and independence from the EU. Therefore, the state's sovereignty was articulated through categories of national culture and nationality rather than state institutions and citizenship. Here in the nation-state compound the nation is translated into and through the state, and where the state is identical with the nation. This is further observable in the Sejm's resolution from 23.06.2006 - a direct response to the European Parliament's (EP) resolution about the "rise of racism and homophobia in Europe" (European Parliament 2006). One of the main aims of this resolution was to give attention to Poland and Polish state officials' practices of homophobia. The Polish state was severely criticised, and the resolution was widely discussed in the Polish media.

In the first paragraph, Sejm "expresses its indignation and outrage" at the EP resolution because of its "untrue and harmful accusations". In the second one, it is stated that Poland is concerned about intolerance, although "Poland expects

however that such activities [monitoring of intolerance] will include all examples of breaking human rights, including breaching the right to life, religious freedom, and public morality". In the next paragraph, "the instances of intolerance" are dismissed as "absolutely marginal", and the Polish Sejm describes the EP comparison between the "insignificant accidents of intolerance" in Poland and examples of "grave crimes and murders of a racist nature" from other EU countries as "a completely inadequate, and unjustifiable". In these first paragraphs the Polish Sejm invokes Poland as under attack, and discriminated against by the EP. In the next paragraphs, the Polish Sejm directly refers to an anti-Semitic incident with the Chief Rabbi of Poland (one of the examples used in the EP resolution), dismissing it as yet again "marginal"; and in the same paragraph also to the "homophobia", albeit in a rather bizarre way. The resolution states: "the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, while identifying with the Judeo-Christian moral heritage of Europe, cannot accept the use in the European Union documents of such terminology as <homophobia>". It is the only reference to the major EP critique towards Poland and the Polish government. It does not challenge EP "accusations", but only makes a vague remark about the use of vocabulary and religious tradition. It also seems rather odd: rather than directly rejecting homophobia as non-existent or marginal (as in the case of anti-Semitism or intolerance in general) the Polish Sejm refuses the vocabulary to talk about it, thus the very epistemological framing of "homophobia as the problem". It is, as if the problem existed, but its conceptualisation and ethical valour was inappropriately given. However, since the Sejm devalues homosexuality, therefore the rejection of homophobia as vocabulary/ethical issue could be seen as even more profound act of rejection. There is not denial of the problems existence, because the very conditions of the problem and the definition of the problem is non-existent for the Polish MPs. Here, one could also wonder what it tells us about the role of homosexuality and homophobia in Polish culture, if they are not only denied, but somehow more profoundly denied their epistemological grounds of existence. Especially in comparison with intolerance and anti-Semitism, which are not subject to such practices (at least not in this particular document). Finally, the last

paragraph of the Sejm's resolution changes the tone of the document. It is highlighted that "Poland is traditionally a state that values and uses the idea of solidarity, protects the rights, and supports the development of all religious and national minorities". Hence, "[we] call upon the European Parliament to recognise, and to actively promote of the Polish tradition of tolerance and multi-ethnicity, as a Polish contribution to the European catalogue of values" (Sejm RP 2006).

As a result although the resolution is an official reply to the EP document it is not strictly formulated as such. It reads more like an expression of frustration voiced from the position of being under supposedly unjust attack. But such voiced sentiments are also markers of wider and perhaps deeper-rooted aggravation than dissatisfaction with just one document of the EP parliament. Taking into account the already mentioned Polish national obsession with its own position between the "East" and the "West" - I suggest that Polish resolutions could be an expression of national sentiments and reactions to on-going processes to the so-called "post-communist transformation". The EP's discursive questioning of the Polish/Central and East European adherence to the EU-ropean standards of tolerance triggered the most brittle strings of the Polish national identity. That is - the anger at the "West" to once again deny Poland its belonging to the cultures of the Occident. But also, and much in contradiction to the previous one - the EU is eliciting fears of another subordination, of breaching the freshly "gained" independence of the Polish state and nation.

However, this Polish resolution is not only a reaction to the EP's proclamations, but a strategy for fighting over the definition of "Europe". This is rather ironic, given Polish anti-Semitism, and references to the Judeo-Christian heritage of Polish and European culture (i.e. evoking a religious and not secular catalogue of values) and seems, in my opinion, to be an act of fighting back for "our Europe", and a way of opposing the EU's hegemonic re-appropriation of "Europe" as a "Western" (secular) EU project. In doing so, it is necessary to recall again the myth of Polish Messianism, the Romantic idea of Poland as the "Christ of Nations", which I discussed in the previous chapter. Both resolutions attempt to

present Poland as a possible victim of imperialism, and make an effort to frame "the Polish tradition" as the *Antemurale Christianitatis*, another well-discussed trope of the Polish national megalomania (Miłosz 1983, 117). Doing so, however, is both an act of national importance, and also of European significance, since the battle is not only about the notion of Polishness, but also about that of Europeanness. The words of the last paragraph of the second resolution recalling Poland as "a state that values and uses the idea of solidarity, protects the rights, and supports the development of all religious and national minorities" is a reference to the popular idea in Poland of a "Golden Age of Polish Culture" (16th century), when Poland, compared to other European countries, was at the forefront of social tolerance to various minorities (Wyrozumski, Zgórniak, and Grodziski 1998). These references however, are evident more to a person familiarised to and schooled to the Polish educational curriculum and national myths, rather than to the intended addressee (European citizenry). Hence futile as they must necessarily be, they signal recurring tensions between the national and the supranational; the ambivalences of Poland and its situation in the new post-1989 world of globalised "Western" liberal values, and its prospects for the future. Let me now move on to the second example - the President's National Address speech.

## **6.2 The Constitutive Other - Nation as an empty signifier in Lech Kaczynski's National Address**

It is useful to begin with a brief outline of the political scene in the given time frame. In the period 2003-2008 covered by the analysis, two parliamentary elections were held, four governments were formed, and one presidential election occurred. In September 2005, Law And Justice (leaders: twin brothers Jaroslaw and Lech Kaczynski, forming government, conservative, Euro-sceptic, nationalist, outspokenly religious) and Civic Platform (leader: Donald Tusk, neoconservative, pro-European) won the most seats in the parliament. They did not manage to form a coalition and Law And Justice allied (in May 2006) with two smaller parties (Self-defence and League of Polish Families, both nationalist, populist, anti-EU,



but with significant 19,4% support). In October 2005, a month after parliamentary elections, Donald Tusk (Civic Platform) and Lech Kaczynski (Law And Justice) contended for the seat of the president. Although in the first round Tusk won over Kaczynski, in the final round, it was Kaczynski who won presidency, defeating Tusk once again. In July 2006 a third change of government occurred, and Jaroslaw Kaczynski became the PM, although he had declared previously that he would not take the seat should his brother win the presidency. In October 2007 (2 years before the end of term of office) new elections were held as a response to parliamentary crisis. This time Civic Platform won with a significant increase in votes, and Donald Tusk became the PM. The League of Polish Families and Self-Defence lost the most, not achieving the required min. 5% threshold to enter the Sejm.

### **6.2.1 Social imaginary - the myth of the nation**

In the first part of his National Address (17.03.2008), Lech Kaczynski builds a common referential ground, a mode of "imagining community", with which his audience could relate and identify. This is achieved by invoking the myth of a "Strong Independent Poland". First of all, Kaczynski calls for the image of a threatened, but eventually victorious, nation. In the first sentences he suggests that Poland was under pressure from more powerful countries within the EU, but thanks to the assertive, firm and tough attitude of the Polish government, Poland has succeeded in securing all that is good for the national legal reforms; reforms that could otherwise compromise and undermine the role and position of Poland in the EU. Although pressured to yield and submit to the will of other states, the Polish government achieved its goals, securing the independence of Poland. Then, the list of achievements is given: a voting system that gives more authority to the Polish vote; a stronger power of veto; the rule of "energy solidarity" between EU countries; and finally, the primacy of national law above the EU. The choice of examples not only illustrates the invoked imaginary, but also the actual visual and audio clips accompanying words in the opening part of the Kaczynski's speech follow the same narrative.

The construction of the speech resembles that of news: a meticulously scripted and staged live show incorporating other pre-recorded material. Firstly, from the beginning we hear a well-known (at least for middle and older generations) leitmotiv from the 1970s Polish television series "Polskie Drogi" ("Polish Roads"). The series is set in the late months of WWII and narrates stories of Polish soldiers and civilians fighting against Nazi troops. Secondly, the listing of Polish achievements is accompanied by clips: of president Kaczynski being congratulated by Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of German government; two officials trying to persuade Kaczynski to do something, and his sharp and decisive gesture of "No, I do not agree"; or a moment from the ceremonial photo shoot of the EU officials, after which one of them steps forward to Kaczynski and congratulates him. The audio-visual narrative, together with a spoken word, make a clear and unmistakable invocation of a well known trope in the Polish national imaginary, that of oppressed Poland fighting for independence. Plus, they introduce the image of the president and government as strong and unflinching instances of the national will. This is directly addressed in the next instance, when President Kaczynski states "[i]t pays to be unequivocal in the defence of the Polish interest". He then mentions 67 billion Euros as an important trophy, because "Poland is emerging from civilisation's collapse, after years of communism". Here again a note of victimhood is played out: the current weak position of Poland is the fault of "communism" (i.e. Russia and the "West", and the post-WWII world order of Yalta agreements), hence successful EU negotiations, billions of Euros and good legal arrangements are becoming even more important, bringing added glory to the Polish president and government.

Overall, the opening part of the former president Kaczynski's National Address can be understood as building "common ground" for and between the audiences. It invokes well-known tropes of the national ideology, re-imagines community, and re-establishes Polishness as a category "ponad podziałami"/"above divisions" - a category that presumably unites the "imagined community" of Poles into the nation. This is the moment when the music fades away, and the second part of the speech commences.

### **6.2.2 Strategies of equivalence - Germans and homosexuals**

In the second block of the speech, viewers are presented with a simplified yet menacing message: the EU can destroy Polish culture (thus the Polish nation) if special protective steps are not taken against such a threat. What is the secret weapon used to invoke fears of national destruction? A unique mixture of old and new reservations: the worst nightmare of "Traditional Polishness" - Germans, and an emerging "new" menace: homosexuals. All this is hidden under the cover of "human rights" as codified in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2007). Let's unpack this.

Firstly, we note that by the end of the first part of the speech, the camera zooms into the figure of the president, visually making him more dominant in the frame. Then, we notice the music is silenced, so the words "But not everything in the EU must be good for Poland" sound more terrifying, forcing a spirit of importance and aggravation onto the viewers' reception of the speech. What follows, is a rather graphic (quite literally!) illustration and exemplification to the mindfully tactical tension built so far.

According to experts, with unpredictable decisions of the European Tribunal of Justice, some regulations of the so-called Charter of the Fundamental Rights may lead to German claims against Polish citizens, demanding restitution or compensation for property [land] left in the northern and western territories, which were granted to Poland after the WWII.

The first menace is Germans wanting to take over Polish lands. On the visual side, the spectator watches Angela Merkel chatting, and greeting (congratulating?) Erika Steinbach - the chair of the Federation of Expellees, the map of Germany from the 1939, and finally, the bucolic, picturesque countryside, with lakes, trees, and greenery. It has to be explained that Erika Steinbach became a highly controversial figure in Poland (and Germany) for her work in the Federation of Expellees and insinuations that the post-war expulsion (or re-location, depending on the point of view) of Germans from the contemporary western and northern parts of Poland was at least questionable. This was instantaneously picked up by

the populist and nationalist groups and parties in Poland, feeding the old fears, and troubling already uneasy relations between the two countries (Puhl 2006; Crossland 2009; Donahue and Andrusz 2009; Deutsche Welle 2009).

The speech continues, and the second example of an "EU hazard" is given. In the frame we see Kaczynski again in a proud posture. The camera begins to zoom in as soon as he gives the second example. Again, in a close up and more dominant onscreen, the former president warns:

Another article of the Charter, thanks to the lack of clear definition of marriage as a relation of man and woman, can threaten [literally: hit] Poland's widely accepted moral order, and force our country to introduce institutions contradicting the moral attitudes of the vast majority of the society.

Interestingly, the words 'gay' or 'homosexuality' are not mentioned, only a vague reference to the 'institution' hostile to heteronormatively defined marriage is made. Instead, we see a clip presenting two men during their wedding ceremony. Images are more telling than words, and it seems that president's officers in the studio were very skilful in persuasion and manipulation, showing that verbal communication is only the tip of the iceberg, when it comes to effective ways of getting a message across.

Both examples maintain a certain degree of non-specificity and vagueness in the vocal narration of the president, in contrast with the chosen visual background, which is much more graphic or, as is said colloquially, "in your face". Both are explicitly framed as a "threat", perilous activities and stances not only passively undermining the "moral order" by presenting an alternative, but pro-actively destroying it, forcing itself upon society. There is a slight swing from the possible dormant threat signalled by the use of 'may' in the first case of "Germans partitioning Poland", to the more vigorous and forceful aggression suggested by the use of 'can', 'force', and 'hit' (in Polish) in the case of gay marriages. Such a swing in the passivity/activity of the agency of the Others should perhaps be connected to the opening words about "unpredictable ruling of the European Court of Justice". In May 2007 the Court ruled that the 2005 ban on

the Pride March in Warsaw (issued by Kaczynski himself, then Mayor of Warsaw) was illegal on three different grounds. The verdict was widely discussed in media, and most politicians read it along the same lines as the 2006 European Parliament's resolutions about homophobia - contesting it as an attack on Polish independence. Thus, the rather scornful remarks about "unpredictable ruling", "so-called" Charter of Fundamental Rights from the president's speech are not empty adjectives, but echo the political disdain of EP resolutions, the Court's verdict, and discussions about the Lisbon Treaty, which span the period between 2006 and 2008.

Both "dangers" (Germans and homosexuals) are of a radical Otherness, one totally incomprehensible within the national framework of "Polishness". They are external to the notion of Poland (spatially and culturally), and aggressively attack boundaries, forcing themselves on the (yet again victimised) Poland. Moreover, they are not only a representation of Otherness, but actually inhabit a place of annihilating negativity - a total opposition, anti-Poland. The figure of the "Anti-Christ" that comes to mind is not totally out of place here, either. The martyrological thread in the national narrative, 19th century's "Poland as a Christ of Nations", or less blatantly formulated in the 2006 Sejm's resolution, "Judeo-Christian tradition" as the rudiment of Polishness - open up the space to conceive of Germans and homosexuals as "Anti-Christ". Such an association is strengthened even more by the still strongly persistent association of "Germany" with "Nazism", and "homosexuals" with "death" (due to the assumed lack of the ability to procreate), and the strong position of the Catholic Church and its values in the Polish public-political sphere (and pope Jean Paul II's "civilisation of death" expression). References like this illustrate what Chantal Mouffe observes in contemporary politics in more general terms - a shift towards the register of "morality", "moralisation of politics". She writes: "[w]hat I want to indicate is that, instead of being constructed in political terms, the 'we'/'they' opposition constitutive of politics is now constructed according to moral categories of 'good' versus 'evil' (Mouffe 2005, 75). The negativity, nothingness of the 'evil'/'Them'/Others is also an effect (and perhaps condition) of the strategy of

equivalence. Laclau and Mouffe conclude: "certain discursive forms, through equivalence, annul all positivity of the object and give a real existence to negativity as such. This impossibility of the real - negativity - has attained a form of presence" (2001, 128-129). In other words, it can be said that what unites elements under the equivalential umbrella of Otherness, is their negation/opposition to the discursive instance deploying the strategy of equivalence. There is nothing that the oppositional elements share among them, and the Nothing is the only "(some)thing" that they share (Torfing 1999, 124).

However, although it seems that in the dialectics of Self and Otherness, negativity is the feature of the latter, we should bear in mind that the Other is also an inevitable part of the Self. Indeed, it is argued that there would be no self without the Other (cf. Chapter 2). Hence negativity haunts the Self. In the case being analysed here, negativity troubles Polishness in its incarnations as "people", as "nation", as "state". When Kaczynski invokes Germans and homosexuals as the aggressors and radical Other(ness) of the Polish nationhood, he also establishes the domain of sovereignty as the fragile point under their attack. Polish sovereignty depends upon the negativity of the Otherness, and hence may be read itself as the manifestation of Nothingness, or at least that is the conclusion that many contemporary philosophers have noticed and elaborated upon.

Sovereignty is never given, as Bodin puts it, because of its ontological status – its being theological, and hence unfounded on any social practice or discursive justification. In other words, its ontological status is nothing. Sovereignty is nothing (Monagle and Vardoulakis 2010).

The notions of sovereignty, and hence state, and nation (for each segment relies on the other and is partially defined by it), are performative and discursive practices, not "entities", "things", stable constructs as they are usually seen and in which form they attempt to present themselves. In this process of performative constitution of the national self, of attaining Polishness, Kaczynski is representing here one of the discourses of the nation, and uses the figure of the homosexual (via "Germany" - "traditional" incarnations of the Other in the Polish national narratives). It serves as a nodal point that fixes the national discourse in a

momentary and fragile, temporary and never fully sustainable, "flash of fullness". It is attained through the emptying of the "nation" as floating signifier, with all its abundance of meanings, back to the status of "empty signifier". Then, it can be consigned with traditional references of the oppression and struggle for independence - to the "past". What happens (in the present tense) is the re-enactment of the past for future purpose - the hegemony of nationhood. A delusionary process as it is, yet necessary, for all that exists only as long as it manifests itself in the processes of becoming and separating itself from the Other.

### **6.2.3 Constitutive outside**

One of the conclusions that the analysis above seems to suggest is that in contemporary Poland, national discourse relies (partially, but intensively) on the exclusion of the figure of the homosexual. The fourth and last element of the second part of the Kaczynski's speech (after warning, firstly of Germany, and then of homosexuals) introduces calm and relaxes the tension. Salvation is possible: "Thanks to the unequivocal attitude of our delegation, we succeeded in protecting [literally: saving] Poland from these dangers". The soothing audio leitmotiv appears anew, contributing to the idea of salvation and tranquillity after the stormy perspective. The president introduces the "British Protocol", an appendix to the Charter of the Fundamental Rights, which makes Poland (and the United Kingdom) exempt from the Charter's binding power. This protocol, as Anna Fatyga, a colleague of Kaczynski and Foreign Affairs MP who negotiated the Lisbon Treaty confirmed, shelters Poland from the menacing German expellees and the homosexuals in Kaczynski's speech (rp.pl 2007; Siedlecka 2007).

So far, the National Address of the former president is constructed in terms of a battle, a war even, between "good", National, Polish, and "evil", European forces. Each side is presented as an enemy and the antagonism seems irresolvable, since the two instances are polarised to their extremes, and no common ground is envisaged. Such discursive moves are perhaps one of the most basic practices observable in politics generally, according to Chantal Mouffe. The antagonistic conflict cannot be overcome nor addressed as long as it remains in the register of 'antagonism' and not 'agonism'. She writes:

While antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are 'adversaries' not enemies (Mouffe 2005, 20).

Germany, the "old" enemy in the "Traditional Polishness" narrative is coupled in the early 2000s with homosexuals, a "new" enemy. The representation of the social situation and advances onto the European arena are presented as a battleground because it helps, in my opinion, to re-constitute the notion of "here and now" of the national narrative. Finding known patterns and themes of victim, oppression, saviour, and victory in times of "transformation", dislocation and instability - helps to make sense of reality. Kaczynski's National Address attempts to re-establish (national) identities by unfolding strategies of equivalence: discursively re-creating the Other, which would re-constitute the boundaries of the nation after the moment of dislocation (1989). Importantly, it is no longer only the Other nation (Germany or Russia, or Jews) but the homosexual as the "constitutive outside", to use Laclau's terminology (Laclau 1990, 17; Torfing 1999, 129). Equivalence operates on the basis of metonymical resemblance, by association. Wendy Brown (2009) underlines that metonymy is an indispensable element of nationalism, so what we observe in the Kaczynski's speech, is that it is the homosexual that is crucially contra-posed to the national, and metonymically framed as the contemporary Other of the Polish nationhood that emerges at the brink of the 21st century.

Homosexuality, I conclude, is a "constitutive outside" for the modern national imaginary in Poland. Torfing defines "constitutive outside" as "[a] radical otherness that, at the same time, constitutes and negates the limits and identity of the discursive formation from which it is excluded (...)" (Torfing 1999, 124; see also Mouffe 2005, 15). Constitutively outside, homosexuality, becomes an instance that can temporarily stabilise the meaning of nationhood (Polishness). However, as I have said, this is never a fully accomplished act, and can only be



envisaged as the process of fixing, establishing, holding, etc., always expressed in the grammatical form of a gerund. This performative aspect of the national and the homosexual identity location needs also to be discussed through the lenses of gender and spatiality, which have already been called upon, but not yet addressed in greater depth.

#### **6.2.4 Locating our selves - maps and borders**

Spatial dimensions are often taken for granted, in the sense that geography and location are treated as "real" and not problematized as possible discursive formations (as are "sovereignty", "state", and "nation"). However, "boundaries", "liminality", "enclosure" and "openings", are categories asking for more scrutiny and attention. In Kaczynski's speech, the dialectics of we/they, here/there, inside/outside prompt us to think about place and location as crucial tropes in his presentation. So does the strategic use of maps as a visual prompt. While the first "danger" of losing land for the benefit of Germans is introduced, spectators are presented with a map of Europe from circa 1939. This not only helps to visualise the possible threat, but actually embodies the menace, mapping it out in the form of Nazism (for the map represents the Nazi Germany and illustrates its geopolitical aspirations). So Kaczynski not only brings flesh to the idea of the German threat, but is using it as a metaphorical representation of not only the "German threat", but a particular incarnation of it: Nazism. The map then becomes a tool in the warfare discourse of Kaczynski, a means of conveying messages, as much as forcing a particular political agenda.

Such exploitation of maps is not unusual though. In the Chapter 3 I have already pointed towards the post-colonial writers analysing the place of the map in the politics of nationalism and imperialism. Cartography has a long tradition of politically strategic deployment, among other methods of subjugation (e.g. Carter 1989; Huggan 1989; Crosby 1995). However, mapping should not only be seen as compliant with oppression; it may serve as well as the site of opposition. Graham Huggan (1989) examines the work of many post-colonial writers to show how the map may be re-gained and then deconstructed, becoming a locus of resistance to imperial domination. The map from the Kaczynski's speech

visualises borders and boundaries, some of which after 2004 quite literally disappeared. The so-called "Schengen Agreements" (1985) regulate free movement within the most of the EU countries, effectively tearing down national borders. In the president's discursive creation, this is not however a fact worthy of celebration, but rather a significant reminder that with the EU there is nothing separating Germany and Poland. The EU is blurring already porous borders/boundaries between the two states even more. Kaczynski's insistence on mapped out borders shows how physical borders of fences, walls, check points, etc. are dependant on discursive (and thus, perhaps more elusive and harder to conceive as real) practises bringing boundaries into life. The discursive erection and maintenance of borders between 'good' and 'evil', Poland and Germany, and assumed heterosexuals and homosexuals, is an act of political governance organising social space according to a particular ideological perspective or apparatus, to use an Althusserian expression, which attempts to dominate the sphere of the universal signifier - the national. Kaczynski needs maps and boundaries to perform effectively the elimination of the "constitutive outside" (EU/Germany/homosexual), and finally - to gain some sense of national identity. However, Wendy Brown in her recent book (2010) suggests that walls (for she is working on "walls" as symbolic and actual expression of states and sovereignty) project an image of the nation-state's sovereignty, which does not exist otherwise; walls stage sovereignty. She makes clear that this projection is not only performed for Others, outside the boundaries. Staging is also, if not at times especially, done for the people of the nation within those walls. In this sense, the use of the map by the former president in his speech is an act of such internal projection; maps, as walls, perform re-closure of the nation from within.

### **6.2.5 The enemy within**

Thinking about the dialectics of inside/outside, us/them - we also have to ponder the possibility of the (already) existing threat within the bordered 'us' territory, not only the external Others. The figure of the "enemy within" is as "popular" as its brotherly equivalent, the "enemy outside" in national discourses. In the history of the narration of the Polish nationhood, such an "enemy within" position has often

hitherto been occupied by Jews, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter. Since the end of WWII and the communist pogroms in 1968, the Jewish minority in Poland has existed only as a tiny fraction of the population. What seems to be happening at the beginning of the 21st century, is the national imposition of the figure of the homosexual (as a modern-day "enemy within". Perhaps because of this shared "location" some critics imply that we can draw parallels between homophobia and anti-Semitism in Poland (Umińska 2006; Ostolski 2007; Graff 2008). However, can such parallels be drawn between Jews and sexual minorities simply because both are constructed as "enemies within"? There are other possible links worth exploring, e.g. xenophobic discourses have often linked "sexual deviancy" with Jewishness, and effeminacy with Jewish manhood (Boyarin 1997). And still we should be cautious of drawing too easy equations between the two related, no doubt, yet surely different, social phenomena.

The figure of the "enemy within" is introduced in the Kaczynski's speech as the third component. After the soothing information about securing the national interests by signing the "British Protocol" (end of the second part), the former president returns to his alarmist tone. Although the document would stabilise and enforce the position of Poland in Europe, the "current government" (that of Civic Platform that came to power after the defeat of Law And Justice) extremely quickly ("a week later") expressed the will to opt-out of the "British Protocol" and sign the Lisbon Treaty unconditionally. This treasonous act of acceding the nation to the evil forces of the EU cannot be accepted and easily swallowed by the president. As a head of the state, securing its sovereignty and independence, he needs to act, to strike back against the act of treason. He implies that giving up on the "British Protocol" is an act of yielding on the vital interests of the nation. It is to be defeated in this warfare of the Polishness and the EU-ropean. "The current government's" decision is a sign of its weakness, but also of the clout and strength of the threatening powers. Unintentionally, Kaczynski confirms that the national discourse can never be secure of itself, that the Other will always be a menacing presence on the national horizon. Moreover, the menace of the EU, coming from the outside has already found its accomplices within the body of the nation - the

nation is already contaminated, driven by the disease of homosexuality. And it must be a powerful one, since it reaches the highest state officials - the government.

What we see in the third part of the speech is the return to the defensive positions in the national narrative, and pluralisation of "dangers" located on the both sides of the imagined borders. (In itself, another example of permanent permeability of borders, unconsciously and unwillingly slipping over the discursive practices that claim otherwise.) Homosexuality, since it is not geographically bound (as "Germany" or the "EU") is largely metaphorical, but can also be seen as a very real agent operating across the boundaries, one that cannot be confined and enclosed by the physical borders; it is the syndrome, cause, and effect of the borderlessness in which the nationhood is diluting itself. Hence the former president's attempts at recreating and re-establishing boundaries that would constitute the identity of the national and the Other selves. However, it seems that the very logic of dialectical opposition that polarises and is meant to crystallise those identities, is also the very logic of the impossibility of pure identity and opposition. The limits of the discursive invocations, physical and geographical demarcations are porous and unachievable, yet necessary for they form the imaginary object of desire and constant struggle for - a goal that spins the perpetual machinery of identifications and locations, of "East" and "West", of nationhood, and the construction of homosexuality, Poland and the EU.

### **6.2.6 Gender in the narrative**

Another interesting factor in the relation between the discourse of the national and the homosexual in Kaczynski's National Address is gender. I have suggested before that the framing of the homosexual threat points slightly more towards an aggressive rather than a passive one. The "homosexual agenda" (fully apprehended only once the "enemy within" is captured and the full extent of this danger realised) is forceful, dominant, and political. Poland, on the other hand, is feminised: passive and penetrated, waiting for the third actor in this scene - the President embodying the national virtues of strength, free will, decisiveness, bravery and assertiveness. A masculine saviour of the feminised dignity comes

again towards the end of the speech. After the last threat of the "treacherous insider", the President as The Saviour comes again to calm down the national anxiety. In a vague remark about the "presidential initiative of a special bill" Kaczynski once again will save Poland from the perils and dangers of all evil Others. It is almost as if the homosexuality with its foreign and unacceptable ("for the vast majority of society") agenda of "institutions" threatening "moral order" was forcing itself on Poland. As I have written in Chapter 5, the rape of Poland was a popular visual representation of the Polish situation during the 19th and early 20th centuries. But I have also suggested that the national menagerie was already a little queer. Also here, should we ease the harness of our imagination, the speech could be said to be rather queer: a straight man's fantasy (the national discourse) about gay men (the homosexual subject) raping an innocent woman (Poland). The construction of the president's speech flows with meanings, symptoms and signifiers that were not intended or anticipated; they abandon their creator's intentions and flow into rather unforeseeable (for originators) directions (where scholars of gender, sexuality and nationalism welcome them on the shores of academia).

In this context, reflecting on gender feeds well into the discussion about the state and the society between liberal and conservative ideologies. If liberals see society as a collective of individuals, conservative and communitarian perspectives stress the idea of "organicism" (Heywood 2003). Society and nation are perceived as one body, an organism, and not a mere grouping of independent parts. Hence perhaps strong opposition to what is deemed a "disease", a malady, "evil" - once the disease enters the body, it affects everything, it spreads and cannot be easily contained. Thus perhaps the "enemy within" may be seen as more dangerous than the danger outside.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have focused the analysis on the former president Lech Kaczynski's National Address, contextualised in two of the Polish Sejm's resolutions. In Kaczynski's speech, a process of re-creating identities emerged as

an important discursive practice. The dynamic between the national discourse and the constructed homosexual figure is mediated by the set of other categories, like state ("Germany", "EU", "Poland"), geography ("Western Europe", "CEE"), history and culture ("East" and "West"). I have found an inspiration to my analysis in the conceptual framework found in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory (discussed in greater extent in Chapter 2), and in a more indirect way, building upon concepts of power and narration found in the writings of Michel Foucault and Homi Bhabha, previously referred to in the Chapter 2 and 3.

Anne Marie Smith (1994) in her book about New Right discourses of race and homosexuality uses Derridean concept of the "supplement" to argue that national identity is a relational category of Self and the Other. I concur with Smith, and want to use her argumentation as my concluding coda; homosexuality in the Polish Sejm's resolutions and Kaczynski's speech, functions as a "supplement" to the "norm". Smith writes that

[t]he 'norm' appears to have been there first, as the natural space, and homosexuality appears to have come later, as that which essentially wants to contaminate the natural space from the outside. It is of course only with the invader figure that the 'norm' takes on this appearance. The threat of the supplementary outside is re-worked to produce that which it could otherwise interrupt, the sense that the 'norm' is an absolutely primary, complete and self-contained space (Smith 1994, 198).

The supplement (the figure of the homosexual from the Kaczynski's speech) is what is needed to constitute the desired fullness (the nationhood), and at the same time, is what prohibits the fullness (of the nation) from becoming. In the analysed discourses of the Polish Sejm and former president Kaczynski, borders and boundaries played a significant role, as tools and strategies of securing identities. However, such "walling" of inside Self, against the Other outside, functions more like a mirror and remainder, rather than an act of disposal. The discourses of nation and homosexuality, more than anything else, are inevitable and haunting mirror images of each other; the Double.

This turns the familiar two-faced god into a figure of prodigious doubling that investigates the nation-space in the process of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are in medias res; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, certainly, in the act of 'composing' its powerful image (Bhabha 1990b, 3).

"Polishness" as a certain set of identity-oriented factors and conditions, may only exist as a "process towards" itself (that is "Free Poland"), since the achievement of its fullness is the Impossible: aporia, a self-mutilation. Therefore, after 1989, and especially after 2004, the relations between Poland and the European Union are sites where we can observe the discursive re-formulations of meanings, priorities, and signifiers.

## ***Chapter 7***

### ***Attachment and belonging***

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, on the way to Katyn (Russia), for an official Polish-Russian state event to commemorate victims of the Stalinist regime, nearly 100 people died when a Polish government plane carrying the Polish state representatives crashed. Amongst the dead - which included current and former politicians, army officers, and church officials - was the president of Poland, Lech Kaczynski. For the next seven days of proclaimed national mourning, all sporting, entertainment, cultural, academic and other types of events and activities were suspended. Media outlets only broadcasted information about the tragedy, or commemorative programmes about the deceased. Internet sites changed their graphics into monochromatic black and white templates. Schools shut down, additional church ceremonies were held, and people kneeled and prayed in the streets. The circumstances of the tragedy also added to the impact: the plane was on its way to memorial ceremonies in Katyn, where, during the Stalinist regime, the elite of the Polish army was mass murdered by the USSR's secret service. "Katyn" became the symbol of Russian oppression of Poland, and although the "old theme" of accusing Russians of evil plans against Poland (so well preserved in the discourse of Polish nationhood) was not directly spelled out (at least not yet at the time), the national myth of martyrological victimhood was explicitly and implicitly present. Additionally, many other issues and problems related to what I have called "Traditional Polishness" were mobilised during that time; all of them pointing towards concepts of "mourning" and "belonging" (and other related notions of "melancholia", "fantasy", and "attachment").

Everyone, willingly or not, one way or another, was affected. In all this, something triggered my curiosity: would lesbian and gay people mourn this tragic death of the president as well? After all, he was publicly and outspokenly homophobic politician. He was the one who, as the Mayor of Warsaw, forbade two Pride marches in Warsaw (2004 and 2005); indeed, as we saw he actively



played this card in his successful presidential campaign. Later, as the president of Poland he made numerous public statements of a homophobic nature (The Irish Independent 2007; cf. also Chapter 6). Taking this into account, perhaps one would not expect much grief within the lesbian and gay community after the death of "their leader". However, what I observed on all major lesbian and gay websites, was exactly the opposite - not only active participation in the acts of mourning, but also a heated debate about whether "to mourn or not to mourn" (with a clear tendency towards mourning). Here, one needs to add and remember that the political elite on the plane, although mostly of the conservative provenance, still, included representatives of the whole political spectrum, including Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka, a former Plenipotentiary For the Equal Status of Women and Men, who was well known in the lesbian and gay community for her supportive work in the area of anti-discrimination. However, the discussions over "strategic mourning" were clearly to do with the political elite in general, and president Kaczynski in particular.

This presented me with another case for the relations between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality in Poland in the last decade. Therefore, the questions around which this chapter revolves are 'why do homosexual subjects mourn a homophobic president?' and 'What does it mean to mourn one's "enemy"?' Since these questions relate to, a situation of trauma, memory, attachments, forgetfulness, and the work of mourning, I start my analysis by discussing the concept of 'melancholia'.

Melancholia as concept has a long and diverse history, and there are numerous works on the subject (e.g. Freud 1957; Freud 2006; Benjamin 1974; Kristeva 1989; Butler 1995; Kear and Steinberg 1999; Zizek 2000; Derrida 2001; Pensky 2001; Eng and Kazanjian 2003; J. M. Jackson 2008). My explorations here have been much encouraged by Eng and Kazanjian's (2003, 5) statement that:

while the twentieth century resounds with catastrophic losses of bodies, spaces, and ideals, psychic and material practices of loss and its remains are productive for history and for politics. Avowals of and attachments to loss can produce a world of remains as a world of new representations and alternative meanings.

One of the most significant theories came from Freud in his seminal essay of 1917, *"Mourning and Melancholia"* (2006), where he looks at two interrelated psychic conditions of mourning and melancholia. He defines the former as "the reaction to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal and so on" (2006, 712). Due to the loss in normal mourning, Freud suggests that there is a constant, if slow and prolonged, withdrawal of the libidinal investment of the ego in the lost object. When the work of mourning is done, the ego is free and invests its desire in another object. Melancholia, on the other hand, could be said to be "mourning without an end", when the issue of loss remains unresolved. Freud writes:

[In case of melancholia], it may be possible to recognize that the loss is more notional in nature. The object may not really have died, for example, but may instead have been lost as a love-object (as, for example, in the case of an abandoned bride). In yet other cases we think that we should cling to our assumption of such a loss, but it is difficult to see what has been lost, so we may rather assume that the patient cannot consciously grasp what he has lost. Indeed, this might also be the case when the loss that is the cause of the melancholia is known to the subject, when he knows *who* it is, but not *what* it is about that person that he has lost (Freud 2006, 715).

In the melancholic case, the withdrawal is suspended, and the free libido is transposed into the ego itself,

But it did not find any application there, but served to produce an identification of the ego with the abandoned object. In this way the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, which could now be condemned by a particular agency as an object, as the abandoned object. Thus the loss of object had been transformed into a loss of ego, and the conflict between the ego and the beloved person into a dichotomy between ego-criticism and the ego as modified by identification (Freud 2006, 725).

However, Freud would later shift his view a little, suggesting in 1923's *"The Ego and the Id"* essay on the formation of the ego that the ego always has its roots in loss, and melancholic identification. Ego is built on the scattered elements of the object-cathexes of the previous investments, now abandoned. In a way, the ego is thus a carrier of the losses accreted over the lifetime of the subject. This is

influential framing that has impacted e.g. writings of Eng and Kazanjian (2003) and Judith Butler in e.g. *"The Psychic Life of Power"* (1997), and thus wider field of critical studies and also this research. Indeed, Butler goes as far as to claim that the melancholia not only contributes to the formation of ego, as Freud wants it, but is the very condition of ego and the related topography of mind. So we see in Freud the melancholic subject develops an ambivalent love-hate relationship between the self and the loved object.

Freud's conceptualisation of mourning and melancholia, of detachment and ever lasting *attachement* has proved incredibly nourishing for generations of psychotherapists and psychoanalytical theorists. As an important essay on the subject and the object relations and the formation of the identity, *"Mourning and Melancholia"* is thus one of the constitutive essays in the history of psychoanalysis. Although crucial for the development of clinical and psychotherapeutic practices, the essay has also inspired many critical thinkers who productively transpose the psychoanalytical theories of Freud onto the realm of cultural studies. Here, I find main inspiration coming from the work of Eng (1999; 2000), Gilroy (2004), Akcan (2005), and Khanna (2006), who operationalise the for-mentioned categories as cultural interpretative codes, or interdisciplinary tools of cultural analysis, rather than relying upon strictly psychoanalytical or psychotherapeutic understandings.

How to reconfigure the individual-focused psychoanalytical theory of Freud, to fit the purpose of group and society-based analysis? For me, it is possible to do so thanks to the structures of subject-object identifications underlying both processes of mourning and melancholia; structures that are not only typical for the individual, but also group identity constitution. In particular I see this in the melancholic nature of ego's attachment to the one that is lost - a relation that resembles the relation between the Self and the Other, always foregrounding issues of identification (formation of identity) (cf. Chapter 2). In Freud's theory of melancholia the libido is withdrawn from the love-object, but since the object is not proclaimed dead, the ego does not recognise the loss - the libido is being transposed onto the ego. It seems worth noticing for my purpose and argument

that the love-object (that was in actuality lost) which is ultimately the Other, and ego (the Self) are therefore equalised in this libidinal economy of melancholic non-recognition of the loss. They are mapped out *one* on the *another*.

Let me rephrase for a better understanding of the process. Otherness (libidinal investment) is withdrawn from the Other (the love-object) and incorporated by/into the Self (ego). There, it will eventually create ambiguity and lead to a schism of ego's self-depreciation, self-criticism, perhaps even self-hatred. This hate is directed at the Other (love-object) that is no more, but which is now inside the Self (ego) itself. Thus, the melancholic "never letting go" is indeed not only a condition of ego formation, as Freud and others after him would have it; but I would argue that perhaps we could even elaborate that it is an act of constituting the-Self-as-the-Other. Ambivalent and troublesome as it may be, the relation is not recognised by the Self (ego) (melancholic refusal to let go and invest its own libidinal energy elsewhere). My point is that the Other is being framed as the one from *without*, not *within*. And it is in this dynamic between the Self and the Other - or rather Self-as-the-Other - that is intertwined with the melancholic attachment, where identification/identity formation takes place (cf. Chapter 2, and the analysis in the previous chapter). Could this be one of the possible bases for the homoerotic and homophobic tensions discussed in the case of nationhood and homosociality (Chapter 4) and here in the section 7.2.4?

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From here on in as the chapter unfolds, I draw on the work already touched on whilst also engaging with more recent cultural explorations of 'mourning' and 'melancholia', to argue that the homosexual subject's practices of mourning are more complexly subversive than regressive, becoming sites of "reconciliation" where the two supposedly exclusive identity positions of "gayness" and "Polishness" are expressed simultaneously. I further argue for the use of identification rather than identity in the explorations of the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality since it helps avoiding the trap of exclusionary subject positioning. And finally, I also want to suggest that melancholic

attachment to the idea of a "Free Poland", as an element of the "Polish melancholic nationalism" (Ziarek 2007), may also be one of the driving forces behind LGBT activism in Poland. In this, I remain inspired by the work of Diana Taylor (1999) who analysed the ethnic minority responses and participation in the UK national (indeed, supra-national and globalised) bereavement after the tragic death of Diana, former Princess of Wales, in 1997:

Is it so strange that we may want to act in a dream that we know full well is not our own? If we must engage, as it seems we must, these muralists show that people will establish the terms of conversation. Rather than constitute one more space for a downloading of the global, it opens one more strategic site for the negotiation of the local (Taylor 1999, 206).

## 7.1 Polish Melancholic Nationalism

Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, in her interesting article "*Melancholic Nationalism and the Pathologies of Commemorating the Holocaust in Poland*" (2007), undertook the task of analysing Polish - Jewish relations through the prism of Polish nationhood, which, in turn, she analyses through melancholia. She tries to apprehend the obsession with national suffering in narratives of Polish nationhood, especially in light of the post-1989 regained independence. This, she insists, is a key element to understand Polish inability to come to terms with its own dark history of anti-Semitism. She writes:

Ultimately, to explain and to challenge this deeply entrenched national ideal of innocent suffering, we have to account for the transformation of the traumatic events of Polish history into an unconscious collective fantasy and for the enjoyment this fantasy provides. And such an analysis of the political/historical role of collective fantasy indeed calls for psychoanalysis (...) (Ziarek 2007, 314).

The author then goes on to develop and expound her argument about melancholic nationalism in Poland. I concur with her reasoning and take as the base line of my further argument that Polish attachment to the idea of "Free Poland", and the historical partition and political non-existence throughout the 19th century (followed by periods of WWII and communism) enable us to see Polish nationhood as a form of melancholic "never letting go" attachment. She insists on the pathological nature of melancholia, and in the unresolved issues of melancholic attachment she sees the roots of Polish anti-Semitism and deeply troubled relations with the Jewish minority. Therefore, in sombre, yet strikingly accurate words, Plonowska Ziarek summarises Polish melancholic nationalism as follows:

In its darkest manifestations, the narcissistic regression of national melancholia obliterates the rights and the suffering of the Other; its religious alibi of innocence makes it impossible to acknowledge any wrongdoing and this protects it from any internal and external criticism; its sadism makes it prone to explosions of violence; and finally its alibi

of existence reinforces time and again passionate attachments to the sacrificial fantasy despite all critical attempts to dispel it (Ziarek 2007, 318).

Building upon her argument, together with the previous observation about the necessity of melancholia for the foundation of the ego (and Self-as-the-Other), I will suggest that not only is Polish nationhood melancholic (with all the baggage of unresolved problems Plonowska shows), but also that it is precisely in this sense of loss and its transformation into identification that Polish nationhood is born. David Eng (1999) wrote about Hong Kong:

[P]ostcolonial Hong Kong subjectivity might be said to emerge precisely at the moment - 1997 - that the colony is lost. (...) [I]f Hong Kong appears as an object at the moment of its forfeiture then it is a melancholic object par excellence - one that is produced only through this framing of loss (Eng 1999, 142).

Using Eng's line of argumentation may be useful and inspirational in thinking through the Polish case. We could say that Polish national subjectivity could emerge only when "Poland" was lost in 1795 in its final partition between Russian, Prussian, and Austrian empires (that continued for the next 123 years) (cf. Chapter 5). In the situation where a people's relation with their country or state is interrupted by a neighbouring country's partitioning and colonisation, the object-relation of the people with that country or state is transformed into an attachment to the *idea of the lost community*. This is the moment when state, country, "Poland" becomes a community, "imagined community" to use the Anderson's term. This is also where and when "People" come to occupy more significant roles in the formation of the "national" – something that is particularly important for contemporary narrations of nationhood (cf. Chapter 3, especially Bhabha). The lost object ("Free Poland") is incorporated into the group self with which the subject (the people) begins to identify as a "community" (multiply individual identifications with one object): "Polish Nation". In other words lost statehood and sovereignty gave rise to the national subjectivity. And we can say that this transformation of loss into subjectivity is melancholic, because it is fixed on the

idea of "Free Poland" as something, as an object that can (arguably) exist "objectively" beyond the imagination of a community. In the same time, it becomes a pure fantasy, an image of something that we are not ready to let go. And indeed, the image of *something* (the memory of a "Free Poland") that is being kept alive as the signifier of some supposed "objective reality", turns out to be a mere *anything* that is just an image, a projection of the imagination. This resonates with Ernest Gellner's claim that nationalisms came before the nations (cf. Chapter 3). The national invocation is what calls a nation into being/existence and, necessarily fixed on the idea of "Free Poland", cannot let it go. Nationalism becomes a form of melancholic attachment, because it cannot detach itself from this idea, since in doing so there would be a disavowal of constitutive grounds for the emerging national identity (nationhood). This is much along the lines of Freud, Butler, and Eng & Kazanjian that were discussed in the previous section, all arguing that melancholic attachment was a significant constitutive element of ego formation. Building on their arguments, I suggest (and this is further explored throughout the capter) that the process of Polish nationhood's formation is eventually also the process of creating the subjectivity of the Other (also as in the Self-as-the-Other). Ultimately, in each of these Others can be found debris of the national self since the Other is reflection (albeit altered) of the self.

Fast forward to 1989, when the situation has completely changed and Poland has "regained" its "freedom" from the overpowering Soviet Union. Here is the situation when those constitutive elements (lost statehood) for the emergence and sustainability of national subjectivity as an (imagined) community, cease. In the epiphany of the sovereign Polish state, paradoxically, is the end of the Polish national identity. It is so, because when "Free Poland" as an object of melancholic attachment is not even proclaimed dead in the accomplishment of the work of mourning, but is instead reincarnated anew as an independent state, there is no more attachment, no more longing, and no more loss; can Polishness exist without the loss?

Referring back to the previous chapter where I made observations about the relations between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality, I suggest that



what happened in Poland after 1989 can be understood with the help of writers working in the area of post-colonial theory. Here I find Paul Gilroy especially useful. In *"After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?"* (2004) he argues that the British Empire served as a rudimental matrix for the modern Britishness. The collapse, "loss of empire", effectively meant loss of certainty about what constitutes British national and racial boundaries, previously provided by the colonial discursive framework. As a reaction to this "loss", Gilroy suggests, there is a process where melancholic attachment builds.; the attachment is not to the empire *per se*, but to the very *idea of the lost empire* (Gilroy 2004, 116).

In the case of post-1989 Poland, I similarly suggest that there is a shift in the form and object of the melancholic attachment, from the *actuality* of "oppression" and "fight for Freedom" (before 1989), to the *idea* of Poland not being sovereign (after 1989). In response to the actuality of the Polish state regaining its independence, a re-conceptualisation of "oppression" has occurred in the discourse of nationhood. Therefore I argue that post-1989 attachment is not located in the "sovereign Polish state", but in the "Free Poland" re-conceptualised as tradition, customs, social order, culture, and so on - that is the "imagined community" of Polish people. In other words, it is the past to which the national discourse clings in order to find a sense of security and stability in the new post-communist reality. I highlighted this in the previous chapter by analysing Sejm's resolution and president Kaczynski's National Address speech. There, the figure of the homosexual is meticulously framed as the Other from *without* nation-state's borders, threatening the "moral order accepted by the majority of society" (to use his words) *within* the confines of Polish nationhood. So Polish nationhood, rather than dispersing itself in the epiphany of the free Polish state, "redefined" its melancholic attachment; it still is about the fight for "Free Poland", but this is now realised not in the *actuality* of the lost sovereignty of the *state*, but in the *idea* of cultural oppression of the *nation*. As we saw in Chapter 6, the oppressive Other is framed as the "European Union" and "homosexuals" (with a traditionally "special" place reserved for "Germans"... as usually).

At the end of this section, I suggest another twist in the post-1989 melancholic identification, now on the side of the homosexual subject. Due to generational differences and the experiences of people and social institutions shaping discourses of nation and homosexuality, the homosexual subject sustained the attachment to the idea of "Free Poland" yet with another referent. Rather than seeing Poland as enslaved by Others (the older generation's point of reference in the struggle for freedom before 1989), or how it reworked into attachment to the idea of Poland being threatened by the new Others (after 1989), for the homosexual subject it is nationhood that is seen as oppressive. If the traditional and more recent national rhetoric of nationhood remains fixed on the "negative" idea of a Poland *free from* domineering Others, then for the gay and lesbian community (younger people brought up under the post-1989 reality of capitalist liberal democracy)<sup>xiv</sup> the "positive" idea of a Poland in which one is *free to* practice self-expression is pursued instead.

## **7.2 Homo-grief after the enemy: When gays and lesbians mourn President Kaczynski...**

If, as Tom Boellstroff writes...

[t]he question of belonging is central to the experience of being gay or lesbi, [then] [t]hese concepts are self-evidently not from tradition, family, or ethnolocality; yet they are experienced as both intimate aspects of selfhood and national phenomena (Boellstroff 2005, 202).

...then belonging, thus, is a more fundamental issue in the relations between the nation and homosexuality. The main argument I want to pursue in this chapter is that when the Polish lesbian and gay community actively participated in (and advocated for) the national rituals of mourning after the death of the political elite and (homophobic) President Kaczynski, they were performing an act of (self)inclusion into the national community, from which they are normally discursively excluded as Others. This, however, suggests the possibility of certain

ambivalences as the consequence of this melancholic identification, tensions *within* the Self-as-the-Other.

And it is perhaps the ambivalence of all relations that should become a focal point in this paragraph about belonging. Even more so, if we are considering the uneasy (and truly "love/hate") relationship between homosexual subject and Polishness. As mentioned above, the homosexual subjects' attachment to the idea of "Free Poland" remains *within* the framework of the Polish national melancholic attachment (but is not limited to it, as I will show below). The ambivalences arising in the Self (ego) as a consequence of identification with the Other (love-object) due to the relocation of the libidinal desire, produce self-depreciation and hate, but also masochistic pleasure. This tension of the Self-as-the-Other may be exemplified by the troubled relations with the "West" and the "East" in the Polish nationhood's history. The psychic process of an ego impoverishment resulting in self-deprecation is transformed into attitudes towards the "West" and the "East" - two constitutive element of Polishness (cf. Chapter 5). The "West" is idealised, and thus a sense of inferiority is developed; yet, conversely, as a counter affect, a sense of the Polish superiority towards the "East" is established (Szrett 1990; Walicki 1994a). These perceptions do not, however, need to correspond with how Poland is perceived by/in the Orient and the Occident; as a consequence, ambivalences in the identity formation may arise. This dialectic is also deployed, for example, by LGBT activist discourses in which the "West/Europe/EU" is presented as the desired state (Krzemiński 2009, 92); and "traditional Polishness" is seen as backward obstacle and source of discrimination (Jozko 2009, 107–111). However, in the case of LGBT discourses, the ambivalence of "in-betweens" is not an affect of the appropriation of the lost object by the emerging (melancholic) national self. It has to do with a troubled and troublesome relation of the homosexual subjects to their nation. This is due to the history of "injury" and exclusion, paving the way to resentment as the condition of (identity) politics (Brown 1993; 1995). I will return to this idea below. Additionally, in the above example of Polish discourses of homosexuality using and calling upon a nationalistic rhetoric of the split between the "East" and "West", it is also the use of

victimhood and oppression rhetoric that links the gay and lesbian community's identity in the ambivalent position in-between "us" and "them", "victims and "predators", "good" and "evil", the Self-as-the-Other.

In the relations between nationhood and homosexuality, the homosexual subject needs to "betray" traditional Polishness in order to establish a new, more inclusive framework of national identification and diversity. We see this when, for example, this "homosexual orientation towards the West" is picked up by conservative nationalistic discourses, where it is interpreted as a type of treason against national sovereignty (cf. Chapter 6); this paradoxically "confirms" conservative national discourse of homosexuality as the "non-Polish" foreign import. Such dialectical scaffolding of warfare-like relations between nationhood and homosexuality is not the only way these relations might unfold, although it is very popular.

First the death of pope John Paul II in 2005, and the cancellation of Krakow's Marsz Dla Tolerancji (March For Tolerance); and then the lesbian and gay community mourning president Kaczynski in April 2010, are two examples where we should look for alternatives. I suggest that at times of such great significance to the national narration of self (as the death of the head of the state), what occurs is not the renunciation of Polishness but an active participation, and perhaps even "over-performance" in the national rituals of mourning; and this was the way in which Polish homosexual subjects performed their "communion within the nation". Perhaps this is what Agnieszka Graff (2008) wanted, when she called on feminist and lesbian and gay activists to not give up on patriotism and to not abandon it just because of nationalist abuse; lesbians and gay men should not give up on their "love for the country". And as time has shown, they have not.

### **7.2.1 Identity and identification**

The work of mourning performed by the Polish gay and lesbian community highlights, firstly, that the work of memory is a work of enactment and participation; and secondly, that "identities" are not unitary and fixed, and it is the process of *identification* rather than *identity* which seems a more useful category

of analysis. What we can conclude so far, following the writings introduced in Chapter 2, is that no identity category can be privileged over another, and certainly such selectiveness is not fixed, if possible at all. In "*Precarious Life*" (2006b) Judith Butler writes that

[p]erhaps, rather, one mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly for ever. Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transmutation (perhaps one should say submitting to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance (Butler 2006b, 21).

The "submitting to a transformation" is an act of openness, and lack of foreclosure to the possibility of becoming/being. The idea of foreclosure and forgetting are useful concepts to further the analysis of my case. It is nothing new to write that remembrance is the foundation of collectivity (e.g. Connerton 1989; Halbwachs 1992; Zelizer 1998; Bal, Crewe, and Spitzer 1999; Huyssen 2003; cf. also Chapter 3). However, forgetting also accompanies this process of collective identification, as a consequence of selecting out exactly what must be remembered, and what not remembered. Moreover, the forgetting in which I am interested here, is not the simple opposite of remembering, but a more profound process of *forgetting as denial*, as elaborated in the recent works of Judith Butler (2006b; 2009). Butler shows how the forgetting/denying of the humanity of the Other is the fundamental act of collectivity (see also Durrant 2004, 5–6), which makes it an act which we should seek to abandon.

In the Polish context, we could observe the foreclosure of gays and lesbians as "proper humans" and thus denied "a place at the national table", to be called "Poles". There are numerous examples, beginning with conservative nationalist discourse, portraying homosexuality as alien, foreign, through politicians comparing homosexual people to necrophiliacs (Rewinski 2006; Przybylska 2006), to cartoonists scornfully ridiculing same-sex partnerships as equivalent to human - goat marriage (Krauze 2009; Lisicki 2009; Karpieszuk 2009). So when the president and other political elite died and gay and lesbian people mourned, when the forgotten knocks on the nation's door, some un-homely and uncanny

spectre begins to haunt the very identity of Polishness and gayness. Remembrance consolidates and disturbs the simple "either/or" dialectic of the national and the homosexual belonging. So when on the Internet's LGBT portals discussions appeared about whether "to mourn or not to mourn" Kaczynski, it was the call of "let's not forget that he was a human" that seemed one of the most pervasive and often repeated arguments. Let me quote a few:

Toudeusz: "[w]e are one in our nature, in humanity. It doesn't matter what you think, what you believe, what you see as good and bad - death doesn't differentiate" (homiki.pl 2010).

KaFor: "Let's build unity in respect of human life - every life" (homiki.pl 2010).

Prometeusz: "No words to describe the dimension of this tragedy. I feel a deep sadness, despite the differences between me and President Kaczynski. Almost 100 people died, most of them well known. Despair after each life taken away from us again by Katyn. May they rest in peace" (innastrona.pl 2010).

zwyczajny: "I think a great tragedy has happened, even though I disagreed with some politicians who died. It's not important anymore which [political] options they represented, which party they were from. They all deserve respect, because first of all, they were people, wives, husbands, parents... I join in pain the families of the dead, and give true condolences. To the dead - may god remember your souls" (gejowo.pl 2010).

In this very call for remembrance, we hear the call of the gay and lesbian community to itself: let us not foreclose the humanity of Kaczynski, let us not render him as the permanent figure of the enemy/Other. This call is a gesture towards the Other that is different from foreclosure/expulsion as a way of constituting ourselves/community; not as "gays and lesbians" against the nation as enemy, but in a more inclusive and accommodating process. This may be a greater revalorisation of identifications rather than fixed identities of neatly demarcated boundaries and supposedly sharp distinctions of what one is/is not. As the homosexual subjects mourn their "enemy" in the body of the homophobic president Kaczynski, they are reminded of their own wounds. User "Stryj" has

expressed this explicitly: "Nobody's just good or just bad. Everyone is worth respect. Shouldn't homosexual people, often denied such human respect, be more empathic in a situation like this?" Stryj directly calls upon the homosexual subject's memory of its own wounds: exclusion, verbal and physical abuse that many experience, in order to not perpetuate the same polarising discourse of "friend or enemy", but to overcome this harmful dialectics.

In calling upon the humanity of the supposed "enemy", and foregrounding his humanity rather than political affiliation or past denigration of homosexuality, the homosexual subject once again wants to look beyond the fixation on identities and to underline the commonality - humanity, grief, loss - as the shared features to all of us; features in which "friend /enemy" identitarian politics can be overcome in the gesture of building inclusive sociality and national collectivity.

[']: "It's not about whether you miss somebody or not, it is about human tragedy! That's the difference. Kaczynski was as he was, but he was a president of Your country, and that's why [we should] respect [him]" (homiki.pl 2010).

The death of the head of the state also necessarily reminds us of the nation's own fragility and its possibility of being wounded: his dead body is the spectre of non-existence in the tormented history of the Polish state. Thus, not surprisingly, the patriotic tone is not uncommon in the commemorative inscriptions.

wolny: "Tragedy in life may happen to everyone. It happened to the presidential couple and the [political and cultural] elite. (...) They have died in the service to the nation. I respect and mourn after them, even though I have different political views and opinions" (gejowo.pl 2010).

przemonice: "I am gay, I am a sensitive person. I cried all day when I have learned that the flower of the Polish political elite, Polish right, president with wife, president Kaczorowski - the last president of our country in exile, they all have died" (gejowo.pl 2010).

### 7.2.2 Attachment as the condition of sexual politics

As we have seen above, the loss of the president and political elite becomes a wound, and also a memory of the wound - it signifies the impossibility of forgetting about the nation and its history, and their necessary imprint on everyone's life (irrespective of their sexual identity). It is also reworked as a human tragedy, a pain to which everyone is subjected in his or her life (regardless of their political identity). "Wound" and "injury", real and symbolic, as conditions of attachment are the starting point for Wendy Brown's reflections upon identity politics in the *"States of Injury"* (1995). For her, modern politics based on claims of "politicized" identities (gender, sexuality, ethnicity) are the result of liberalism's failure in fulfilling its promise of justice and equality for all. It also means, according to Brown, claims based on identities are futile in their aimed transformative attempt. Because identity politics relate to and rely upon our own history of injury, in order to sustain its claim, it must necessarily scratch its own wounds to make claims and draw legitimisation upon them. As a consequence, in the words of Doezema:

[in] seeking protection from the same structures that cause injury, this politics risks reaffirming, rather than subverting, structures of domination, and risks reinscribing injured identity in law and policy through its demands for state protection against injury (Doezema 2001, 20).

One of my claims in this chapter is that the homosexual subject's (somewhat ambivalent) melancholic attachment to the Polish national community and LGBT activism to the idea of "Free Poland" ("free to be yourself") is not a disarming affectation or a pathological state, which comes with melancholia (Freud 1957, 243). In fact, what I see to be at the heart of Polish sexual politics is the already mentioned "wounded attachment" (Brown 1993; 1995). However, the melancholic "never-let-go" attachment/the national identification is also important; these two attachments fuel sexual politics in Poland. "Wound" and "melancholia" make homosexual subject fight back for their rights (some call it "sexual citizenship"), and create the vision of "Free Poland" that would recognise



and accommodate a diversity of subject positions, and that would not foreclose itself to the (sexual) Other.

The situation of mourning after the death of president Kaczynski (and five years earlier after the Pope died) was a moment when discussions about pride marches ignited. In 2005 Adam Ostolski published an article "*Zaloba po odwołanym marszu (Grief after the cancelled march)*" (2005), in which he argued against the decision by Krakow's "March For Tolerance" organisers to cancel the march. He believes that "[the] decision to cancel the march seems to be not only a symptom of disturbing submissiveness towards homophobes' expectations, but, worse, it is based on few erroneous arguments" (2005). Ostolski then moves to listing arguments for organising the march just after the official mourning period after the death of pope John Paul II. One of the main issues to pursue in these strategic discussions (on organising public events) is the idea of freedom, precisely "Free Poland" (although it is not explicitly named), where the rights of gay and lesbian people are seen as universal human rights in struggles towards which no event/situation can or should be an obstacle.

In 2010, another discussion about the shape of sexual politics and strategies took place. This is visible in numerous posts under already mentioned articles (homiki.pl 2010; gejowo.pl 2010; innastrona.pl 2010) on gay websites, posted after the death of President Kaczynski. In particular, the discussion sparked questions about the organisation or cancellation of the Europride march 2010, which eventually took place in Warsaw in July 2010 (i.e. six months after the president's death). Other examples include a cancelled film festival as part of the "LGBT pride cultural week" held in Lodz in April (Dzień Milczenia 2010); and a postponed and rescheduled Day of Silence Against Homophobia (organised by Amnesty International on the April 17th).

The second thread in these discussions concerns the form of LGBT activism/behaviour: what to do in this crisis situation? And how/what should be done by "homo/sexual citizens" in order not to disrupt the national grief. But also importantly: how to capitalise on the appropriate behaviour? In a way, the whole discussion whether "to mourn or not to mourn" is about survivability as Polish

sexual citizens, thus it bears marks of strategic thinking about the future (even if not formulated in such praxis-oriented terms). Also, the fact that all the lesbian and gay websites (commercial and NGOs) changed their graphic look to monochromatic black and white, and went into a one week "coma" is an example of "strategic" practice that has further-reaching consequences than in the case of other, nation-wide, media outlets. It is well summarised in the words of QUASIMODO:

"I think (my suggestion is) that it would be a sign of good manners to call off this year's Parade. Why would we want to aggravate conflicts in a society marked by such great tragedy. For sure, such a move would not have damaged us, actually, to the contrary" (homiki.pl 2010).

In the gesture towards the bereavement of the past, rooting itself in the present, but looking towards the future, we necessarily evoke time. So to see how attachment translates into social activism, we should look again at temporality and its implications in the discourses of the nation and homosexuality.

In this discussion about the homosexual subject's "wounded attachment" to their own injury, (giving rise to identity-based political claims and thus, as Brown claims, perpetuating the history of harm), we should constantly filter this process through the cultural and national context of post-1989/post-2004 Poland. Brown's "wounded attachment" is completed in my case with the melancholic national narrative. As a consequence, "Free Poland" stands as the object of both, supposedly contradictory, attachments. Social activism stemming from these two forms of attachments is possible because melancholia may be understood as a sort of becoming (Min 2003; Butler 2003). David Eng and David Kazanjian, in their introduction to *"Loss: The Politics of Mourning"* (2003), argue that

[f]or instance, we might observe that in Freud's initial conception of melancholia, the past is neither fixed nor complete. Unlike mourning, in which the past is declared resolved, finished, and dead, in melancholia the past remains steadfastly alive in the present (Eng and Kazanjian 2003, 3-4).

This continuous engagement with the loss thus, "generates sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as the reimagining of the future" (2003, 4). Ranjana Khanna makes a similar point when she writes that

[m]elancholia, however, is not simply a crippling attachment to a past that acts like a drain of energy on the present (...). Rather, the melancholic's critical agency, and the peculiar temporality that drags it back and forth at the same time, acts toward the future (Khanna 2006, 3).

By way of summary for this part of my chapter about sexual politics, I would like to quote Wendy Brown from *"Wounded Attachments"* (1993). Towards the end of the essay, she asks:

[w]hat if "wanting to be" or "wanting to have" were taken up as modes of political speech that could destabilize the formulation of identity as fixed position, as entrenchment by history, and as having necessary moral entailments, even as they affirm "position" and "history" as that which makes the speaking subject intelligible and locatable, as that which contributes to a hermeneutics for adjudicating desires? (Brown 1993, 407)

What I wanted to do above was to show that homosexual subjects mourning their "enemy" President Kaczynski may be read as an example of the alternative Brown is looking for. Although we remain within an identity politics framework (gay, lesbian, national), and although wound is at the heart of sexual politics, there is something subversive in this process. What is different then, and goes beyond the "revengeful" politics of injured subjectivities, is the multiplication of attachments stimulating politics and discourses of homosexuality in Poland. The death of president Kaczynski creates the space for the reconciliation of the two seemingly oppositional discursive positions of the national and the homosexual. It thus opens up the prospect of thinking/doing identifications outside of the dialectical identitarian discourse of nationality vs. homosexuality, each rendering the other as their constitutive Other. The memory of injury/wound, attaching itself to the "Free Poland" object, somehow self-subverts it because of the unstable and

multiple referents to which "Free Poland" redirects. These two referents are pre-set as incompatible, if not carefully orchestrated to work against each other ("homo as threat", "nation as burden"). Through the identification in the affect of hurt (characteristic for both, the national and the homosexual subject positions) the negative side of identity politics is overcome, since it cannot be attributed to any one particular "history of injury". Therefore, lesbians and gays mourning their "enemy" offer perhaps such an example of Brown's "wanting to be" diluting rigid identity into never fully possible to contain, desire. Could this be one definition of social activism? I do not want to make claims here that all social activism is melancholic; but only suggest that sexual activism in Poland has one of its roots there.

### **7.2.3 Regression or subversion?**

Diana Taylor (1999, 2006) observed that when Princess Diana died in 1997, ethnic minorities in the UK and all other groups of people around the world were put in a position of "passive recipients" of (UK) national grief. She elaborates on this phenomenon, moving beyond the simple conclusion that it worked solely as a modern extension of the former British colonial hegemony. In all the ambivalence, Taylor (1999, 2002) proposes to see ethnic minority mourners as active agents and not passive observers of the mourning drama. In the Polish case, one could say that grief over the outspokenly homophobic president Kaczynski could not be shared by the lesbian and gay community - it was not theirs. But at the same time, I am more interested in acknowledging the homosexual subject not only as "submissive receivers", but also as "active performers" in the national spectacle of grief.

Of course, gay and lesbian participation in the rituals of nationhood may also be interpreted as a "failure" of its activism: a regressive step backwards and giving up in the struggle (as argued by e.g. already mentioned Ostolski 2005). Without completely rejecting this argument, I want to favour the alternative viewpoint, according to which the situation may be read in terms of subversion of the national logic. When lesbians and gay men joined millions of other Poles in the public expression of their grief, they mourned not only as Poles after their

president, but also as homosexuals mourning their own "enemy" in the body of Lech Kaczynski. As such they took part in the process of consolidation of the imaginary community of the nation - a process which is denied them as Others. By pro-actively grieving, without waiting for anyone to accept and confirm them as "legal" members of the national community, Polish homosexual subject, by doing what is precluded and forbade to them, usurped the right to self-constitution in their own belonging.<sup>xv</sup>

Plonowska Ziarek uses the term "redemptive suffering" (2007, 311) to describe another feature of the Polish melancholic nationalism, which ideally fits the relations between the discourses of the nation and homosexuality. Mourning President Kaczynski - an act of suffering after the loss - becomes an act of redemption from Otherness into Polishness. Paul Gilroy (2004, 110) also observes a similar process of a minority buying itself into nationhood in the post-colonial UK. This is possible because 'mourning' denotes (1) performance and (2) the affect of grief.<sup>xvi</sup> But what would be the performance of grief in this odd context of lesbians and gays mourning homophobic president? Using Taylor words again:

performance makes visible (for an instant, "live", "now") that which is always already there - the ghosts, the tropes, the scenarios that structure our individual and collective life. These spectres, made manifest through performance, alter future phantoms, future fantasies" (Taylor 1999, 195).

So in the performative aspect of mourning after the deceased, in the act of crying, the transformation of identity occurs. In tears the national and the homosexual are no longer exclusive identity positions; in tears of identification with fellow nationals, the performative aspect of being what one socially is perceived to be ("Perverted Homo") dissolves into "simple" "being as if" somebody/something else ("Homo the Pole"). Rather than rejection, we observe a transformation of the role of the nation for the homosexual subjectivity.

This brings to mind Sara Ahmed's concept of an "affect alien", that is "to be out of line with the public mood, not to feel the way others feel in response to an event" (S. Ahmed 2010, 157). Because homosexuals do not want to remain on the outskirts of the national community as "affect aliens" they mourn and, in the same

act, do not really "put aside" their gay identity, but rather are/perform as "gay" and as "Poles" in their identification with nationhood. Performing in this sad event has something, paradoxically, of a "happiness promise" and is a "hopeful performative" (Ahmed 2010, 200). As we repeat the word happiness believing that by repetitive recitation happiness occurs/will be, so when the homosexual subject performs Polishness (by taking part in the national rituals of mourning), they also hope that it makes them/will make them Poles. Being "Homosexual the Pole" will thereby be achieved: the subjectivity of the Polish/national and the Other/homosexual will be reconciled as One.

### **7.2.4 Mourning and the homosociality**

In Chapter 4, overviewing the literature about nationhood and sexuality, I recalled the issue of homosociality, the homophobic rejection of homosexuality, and homo-eroticism. I would like to ponder that triangulation in the context of the dead body of the head of the national polity. Among other functions, homophobia is the negative referent of LGBT politics and the gay and lesbian community (rendering nation-as-Other). It is also the expression of national resentment towards the homosexual-as-Other. But in the homosocial cultures of dominant masculinity this resentment adds up to homo-eroticism (discharge of homosexuality and compulsive heterosexual fantasy performed by men for the pleasure of other men) of the national collective. As Plonowska Ziarek comments, with reference to Freud's *"Totem and Taboo"*:

Freud demonstrates how the sons' murder of the primal father was transformed into collective identifications with the empty place of lawful symbolic authority. (...) [P]erhaps we can also hear in this story traces of the archaic and ambivalent homosexual object relation (brother's hatred and erotic love of the father), the loss of which, as in the case of melancholia, is also replaced by identification with the dead object (Ziarek 2007, 315).

In the national (male-identified) adoration of the leader (another male) we observe an expression of desire for manliness (state politics as the rule of the "firm hand" against the Other/homosexual), so eagerly performed by Kaczynski himself as the

president/father of the national family (cf. Chapter 6). We see that homo-eroticism is inscribed into the process of the national identification/identification with the nation. The death of the head of state (an object of national desire) turns the world upside-down. While the gates are not guarded, Otherness, traditionally assigned to "femininity", enters the sphere of the national (masculine) through such "female" characteristics as grief, emotionality, mellowness, and compassion. To understand better the specificity of this "world turned upside-down" we may look into anthropological literature, especially the writings of Victor Turner. In *"The ritual process: structure and anti-structure"* (1995), he links death to, among other phenomena, the state of liminality, i.e. of "in-betweenness". He writes:

the attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classification that normally locate states and positions in cultural space" (Turner 1995, 95).

I wonder if we could argue that the homosexual subject as the Other mourning the nation's (homophobic) leader locates itself in the position of such "threshold people"? "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the position assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner 1995, 95). Excluded as Other, the homosexual subject does not belong to the socially and politically sanctioned space of sociality/nationhood. And yet, s/he dares to act against their assigned role/place in the hierarchy of inclusion/exclusion, thus bridging the boundaries of collectivity, somehow opening/forcing its displacement. It is this "betwixt and between" that becomes the accommodating ground for something new to happen. But this is only possible because of the extraordinary time of mourning, when all the normative routines get (partially) suspended. The homosexual Other, which in the nationhood's heteronormative (and masculinised) discourse is ostracised as weak, mellow, soft, emotional - i.e. "feminine" - uses precisely those qualities to invert his/her own position. At a time when the usual performances of the "normal" and "masculine" of the nationhood is suspended in bereavement, it is precisely the ("abnormal" of) "feminine" that is embraced. Death of the president reminds us of

the fragility and vulnerability of the human body/being. It also helps to reevaluate and appreciate (if only temporally) the "female" emotional care we give each other. The national collectivity of paternal law and order softens into a sociality of precarious lives. In the moment of grief, when the "feminine" qualities of emotional care take precedence over the "masculine" rigid law, the homosexual Other finds his/her gateway into the heart of the nationhood. Death opens the gate and allows the (feminised) Other to use this temporal aberration in the life cycle of the nation and to enter the sacredness of the (masculine) national temporality. Perhaps the status of the Otherness, existing somewhere in what could be designated as "the threshold of the norm", is also what facilitates its "communion *within* the collectivity" of the nation at the moment of the extraordinary.<sup>xvii</sup> Significantly, this process is mediated and facilitated through gender/gendered categories. The negotiation (and reconciliation) of sociality anew occurs in the womb of culturally designated "femininity" of emotional care, respectability and recognition of the precariousness of life.

After Freud we could say, then, that the death of the father (here president, "the father of the national family") enables his "bastard children" to identify symbolically with the empty place of paternal authority - to identify with Polishness. When the body is dead, it is death that tears the veil of the national down to reveal it as nothing more than the space of empty universality, to be constantly replenished anew (Laclau 1996). Yet once again the whole situation appears to be a little queer: feminised Otherness penetrating the masculine nationhood only to become part of this (female) body of Polonia.

### **7.3 Conclusions: mutual desire**

In this chapter I have used the notion of attachment as a point of departure in the analysis of the homosexual subject's mourning after the tragic death of (the infamously homophobic) president Lech Kaczynski in April 2010. I have tried to show that this concept may be useful because it is possible to argue that the whole notion of Polish nationhood is built upon melancholic attachment ("melancholic nationalism"). Although my case may be seen as "regressive", the



postponing of ("radical"?) events by the gay and lesbian community to respect the pressures of the nation, I propose more an optimistic reading of it as "subversion". In my analysis, it became clear that "identification" rather than "identity" is a more useful category in understanding the relations between the discourses of the nation and homosexuality; a category that allows us to see beyond the binary and exclusive identitarian system. Identification - a process of relating subjectivities and objects - seems to be a better way of understanding and describing undercurrents of sociality and collectivity. "Identity" - understood as a sort of given or acquired, but in either case, stable "position label" - proves rather an inefficient and insufficient tool for understanding a "crisis situation" such as death and rituals of bereavement. My analysis shows that we need to go beyond "sexuality" and "nationality" as fixed (opposing) positions/identities, because only then are we able to grasp the innate instability of sociality, something which Laclau and Mouffe refer to as "social" (2001, 111). Such an approach, in turn, enabled me to argue that one of the driving forces of sexual activism in Poland after 1989 stems from this "wounded attachment", but also bears traces of the Polish melancholic nationalism and its attachments. The combination of the two effectively disturbs them, easing their attachment bonds with their object(s), thus opening the possibilities for new forms of politics.

However, in the above discussion about the gay and lesbian community "overcoming" supposedly mutually exclusive identity positions ("gay" vs. "Pole") in the process of *identification with* (the national) we need to recognise something that could be called the "paradox of transgression". In order to transgress a liminal point, we firstly need to concede to what we hope to overcome (see also the introduction to Fuss 1991). Similarly here, we need to acknowledge that in the above interpretation the nation stands as the figure of Other, against which lesbian and gay identity emerges. The mourning voices try to overcome this dyad by calling upon Kaczynski's humanity yet this very call reminds and confirms to us that nationhood (especially when appropriated or represented by the conservatives) stands for some sort of Otherness. So too the homosexual subject needs the nation as its opposite (which is already within). The situation resembles

what Seiji M. Lippit's (2003) writes about Japan's national identification with/against the "West", and also describes well the relation of the homosexual subject to the nationhood in Poland:

Yashiro discovers that his rejection of the West can never be absolute, for there is always a residue, a remainder that cannot be eradicated. (...) In this sense, Yashiro's encounter with Europe is not only a confrontation with the other, but, more importantly, a revelation of the other existing within (Lippit 2003, 238).

The consequence of this internally dis/junctive process is, after all, that of the intended bridging the two. The Polish homosexual subject needs (to varying degrees, of course) the nation as their referent, therefore they are "Polish homosexual people" rather than just "homosexual people in Poland". This perhaps obvious conclusion about the homosexual subject being always already the national is worth pairing up with the one made in the previous chapter about the presidential speech: that the national is always already (a little) queer.

As the coda to this chapter, I can think of no better words than those of Tom Boellstorff in the book *"Gay Archipelago"* (2005), describing the relations of homosexual Indonesians to their state:

Gay and lesbi Indonesians show their fellow citizens that it is possible to imagine a new kind of national belonging where difference stands no longer as raw "diversity" to be ground into national "unity," but glittering islands of possibility in an archipelago of tolerance and justice (Boellstorff 2005, 229).

## ***Chapter 8***

### ***The quest for “ordinary”***

In Chapter 6, I analysed how national discourse became/is attached to the figure of the homosexual as the Other/abject. In this relation, homosexuality plays the role of the supplement, unsettling the national discourse performed by the (nation-)state. In Chapter 7, I looked at the somewhat reverse process of homosexual subjects being attached to the idea of the nationhood. I have shown how manifold and unstable this relation(ship) is, and how it manifests itself in extraordinary times of great national crisis, such as the death of the president. In this chapter, I am seeking to further explore the relation between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality, with attention given to problems introduced in Chapter 7. That is, I want to study the role the nationhood plays in the discourse of homosexuality, and since the previous chapter was about “extraordinary”, the current one engages with the “everyday” and “ordinary” times.

To do so, I am presenting two case studies. The first is the “Niech Nas Zobacza/Let Them See Us” (2003) campaign, organised by the Campaign Against Homophobia (CAH) and photographed by Karolina Bregula. The second one is the “Chcesz Tolerancji? To sobie wybierz!/Want Tolerance? So choose one!” (2006) campaign, organised by the Lambda Warszawa Association. The former one was staged “for society” nation-wide, with a highly surprising and heated media coverage. The latter campaign, conversely, was organised on a much smaller scale, presenting us with what could be called “LGBT discourse”. It was concerned with gays and lesbians, structured by them, and organized for themselves. The goals were self-mobilisation and consciousness raising before the election times. These two campaigns will help me to scrutinise the hypothesis that Polish LGBT organisations, in constructing the discourse of homosexuality, at times embrace and deploy national (and perhaps even nationalistic) discursive elements and strategies. Building upon Chapter 3’s “banal nationalism”/“everyday nationalism”, I want to suggest here that the two campaigns can serve as examples (to varying degrees and aspects) of what is theorised as “everyday

nationalism”. Furthermore, I will ask how the relation(ship) between homosexuality and the nationhood is constructed in LGBT organisations’ discourse? I will also consider the possible effects of this relation(ship) for the gay and lesbian community.

Firstly, however, I want to contextualise the two campaigns, historically. Poland A.D. 2002/2003 was a time of finalising “transformation adjustments” requested by the European Union from Poland as the so called candidate country. These adjustments - which officially began in 1997, and five years later were heading towards the end – set the accession year for 2004. This was welcomed within the gay and lesbian community and organisations, and among all other pro-European groups. In 2002/2003, that is when the “Let Them See Us” campaign was unfolding, and when the Sejm has passed the resolution about “Polish sovereignty in culture” (cf. Chapter 6), the excitement of the EU accession was perhaps one of the most inspirational and motivating drives for Polish LGBT organisations. The promise of the EU was, dare I say, as alluring to the imagination, and motivating peoples of Central Europe to stand up against the communist regimes, as the “West” was before 1989. (More insights on some aspects of the relationship between Polish LGBT activism and the EU can be found in: Krzeminski 2009, 92-4; or (Lambda Warszawa and KPH 2007). Indeed, the EU was a new incarnation of that “dream of freedom and liberty” that was behind the Solidarity movement in the 1980s; two decades later, it was behind the trust LGBT organisations paid to the EU as a solution, a trust that also help to reinvigorate the idea o solidarity/solidarity (cf. Gruszczynska 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; Binnie and Klesse 2011).

It is also important to recall once again that the setting for this whole thesis is the time of the so-called “post-communist transformations” (cf. my discussion of “modernity” in the Chapter 4). The post-1989 period recalls in many ways the industrial evolution in Western Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the intense processes of economic change of modes of production and their impact on society and social relations. Post-WWII period in Poland saw the rise of the state communist politics based on the premise of heavy industrialisation, and in the

post-1989 period we are witnessing an intensive processes of adaptation to the “Western” models of already post-industrial, service-based neoliberal market capitalism. But what I mean by metaphorically comparing post-1989 in Poland with the industrial revolution in the “West”, is more to do with the consequences of the rapid, intensive and extensive changing modes of production and growth generation, than with anything else. The post-1989 period in CEE/Polish history is a time of great social unrest, instability and uncertainty about the future in the face of the unknown of the new. The population are facing new problems of unemployment, homelessness, rapid devaluation of goods and money leading to significant pauperisation of society (among others: Wnuk-Lipinski 1995; Staniszkis 2001; Jakubowska 2002; Domański, Ostrowska, and Rychard 2004; Galasińska and Galasiński 2010; Kozłowski and Domański 2010). These new political and economic conditions of everyday life have impacted (although of course, to varying degrees that are yet to be measured) on social and cultural norms. For instance, we can imagine one of the consequences would be the dissolution of old forms of social stratification, and emerging new ones, brought about with the “new” neoliberal market economy and “Western” liberal models of democratic political regime (among others: Szacki 1995; Domanski 2002; Jasinska-Kania and Marody 2004; Domanski 2009; Marciniak 2009). It is this background that I want reader to keep in mind while following my analysis and argumentation in the following paragraphs.

## **8.1 “Let Them See Us” (2003)**

Let me begin with a quotation from the campaign’s website:

Authenticity was important for us - we deliberately wanted true homosexuals, and real couples. (...) All the photographs are in one style: people are shown on the backdrop of winter’s urban scenery; couples hold hands and look into the camera’s lenses. Colours are toned and quiet. Photographed people are likeable. In the photographer’s concept of Karolina Bregula, all photographs are alike, even monotonous - to make the viewer who sees all 30 pictures get bored, and to make them think that they pass hundreds of such people in the street. [Everything is done to make them think that] lesbians and

gays are not sensational. If lesbian and gay people look so normal and ordinary, they are as normal as the viewer themselves<sup>xviii</sup>.



Figure 7: "Niech Nas Zobacza" / "Let Them See Us" (2002)



Figure 8: "Niech Nas Zobacza" / "Let Them See Us" (2002)

Another quotation from one of the organisers: "Our campaign presents delicate photos, without kissing and nudity. Just couples holding hands. Nothing outrageous. They [gay and lesbian people] are normal people, not some stereotypical sissy queens" (wyborcza.pl 2003a). And finally, a fragment from the influential weekly magazine *Polityka*:

Why did they agree to be photographed? - A sense of duty - says Jacek, Arek's partner. - To be truthful - says Daria, Dominika's partner. - Let them see that a lesbian is not a butch dyke, but a normal girl. (...) They take part in the "Let Them See Us" campaign to show homosexuals as ordinary people. Just couples holding hands. Not sinners, not perverts, nor tyrannized martyrs. Not from gay parades, not in frocks, not bull dykes, as people imagine them. But normal and ordinary, as the neighbour from the next door, a shop assistant from a corner shop. Like everybody. So in photos they appear a bit out of shape, a little shy, without striking poses and stylisation (Pietkiewicz 2003).

There is no doubt that the crux of the message sent by organisers to the society is that of "normality" and "ordinariness"; it presents gay and lesbian people as being like and the same as everyone else. What is interesting here is how this "normality" is achieved, and what it actually means, "to be the same as everyone else". One straightforward aspect of being the same/like is a kind of invisibility: it is about being indistinguishable for the rest. Paradoxically then, in "Let Them See Us" lesbian and gay people are made visible, in order to become invisible. The visual campaign putting images of gay and lesbian people in the media and advertising places across cities in Poland, is singling them out for the straight gaze; at the same time, it is organised to "hide" them (gays and lesbians). Hiding in this case means to take lesbian and gay people away from the abject position of the Otherness, and bring them into the socially acceptable realm of universality (thus invisibility). I will suggest that this place of universality, normality, and the ordinary is precluded and coded in a concept and ideas of nationhood. But since these categories are heavily invested in the dialectical dynamic of inclusion and exclusion, the performed desire of being the same/the one is already somehow crippled by the organisers' themselves, in the choice of a title. "Let Them See Us"

relies on division between *us* lesbian and gay people, and *them*, the straight society. If a little unfortunate, from the campaign's point of view, it is a rather counter-productive label, working against the explicit and implicit goals and purposes of the campaign.

Below, I will show that the "normality" (nationality) evoked so blatantly in the campaign, is performed through at least two means. The first is the gender normative prescriptions ("not bulldykes or sissies"), and the second striving for the social "respectability" (Mosse 1985) of an aspirational petit bourgeois positionality ("like a shop assistant from a corner shop").

In an article in a popular women's magazine "NAJ", one of the lesbian couples is introduced as follows:

Daria is DIFFERENT. She loves a woman not a man. And she speaks about it publicly. (...) From the enormous poster two young women are looking at passers-by. Attractive, smiling, fit. And ordinary. Just like those whom we pass by everyday in the street. Dressed up in jeans and jackets, like their peers. They walk holding hands. As if returning from a walk (Uszynska 2003).

When we look at the posters we see an intended dull and unexciting portrayal of homosexual couples. Young men are "not cross-dressers from a gay parade" (wyborcza.pl 2003b), and young women are rather conventionally feminine. Neither are particularly ideal in their representation of femininity and masculinity: a little obese, not perfectly in shape, some women with short hair, some men with long hair, etc. In other words, ordinary rather than representing ideal types of gender. This, as I will show, is exactly what is most desired as the campaign's signal to the general population. Such insistence on the positive image of lesbian and gay people is not surprising, if we account for all the stereotypes and scornful representations of homosexuality produced and in circulation across many cultures. Visibility, according to Eric Clarke (2000), is one of the main areas of interest for LGBT politics. Usually grounded in the conviction about negative/wrong stereotypes of gay and lesbian people as deviant, dysfunctional, gender disordered and so on, the focus was/is on the creation and dissemination



of the reverse, showing gay and lesbian people as "normal" and "ordinary" (E. Jackson 1995; Dyer 2002; Benshoff 2004). In this light, "Let Them See Us" resembles the 1980s "positive images" campaigns organised in the UK, or the homophile organizations in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, which suggested that their members should observe gender-normative rules (look like women/men, act in a masculine/feminine way), in order to be perceived as proper and good members of the society (Blasius and Phelan 1997, 239).

However, what if the insistence on normality becomes almost obsessive and constantly, time and again, invoked as the mantra of a "hopeful performative" (Ahmed 2010, 200) that is meant to make it happen? Description becomes prescription, an indicator of the normative quality. The open call to society provides as well a goal for the gay and lesbian community. Photographs and a constant pledge seem to sub-code the following message for the gay and lesbian community: if we fight disdainful stereotyping, we should back it up with our own exemplars. If we claim to be the same, we have to prove to them that we are the same. We need to be those feminine lesbians and masculine gays; if we claim normality, we need to be normal. The campaign, then, seems to have two faces: one of the pledge and the other of the instruction. In all this, organizers do not seem to recognize the instability of the very category of normality, its inner incongruities, and instead take it for granted, unscrutinized. Furthermore, Anna Gruszczynska (2009a), in her excellent analysis of Polish LGBT parades, has also noticed strong normalising ideals behind activists' discourse of what the "gay parade should be. She writes:

At the same time, the efforts of the research participants to produce "normal", desexualised citizens through the public encounters discussed in this thesis, relied to a large extent on an unproblematic understanding of heterosexuality and heteronormative assumptions of what is defined as (not) "normal" in the public sphere. After all, as discussed previously, the ideal of a "normal" Polish citizen was rather restrictive, where perhaps the most striking example was the "Normality Parade" organised by the All-Polish Youth a week after the banned Warsaw Pride in 2005 (see also Chapter 2). The event was mainly attended by young men chanting homophobic slogans such as "stop the gay propaganda", "streets are ours, hospitals are yours" and

"paedophiles and pederasts, they are the real supporters of the EU" (Grochal 2005). In this context, heterosexuality remains based upon homophobia and xenophobia. (Gruszczyńska 2009a, 203)

According to Gruszczyńska, unreflective re-deployment of "normality" by LGBT activists necessarily repeats (although unintentionally) the homophobic framework of the heteronormative social organization. Also, in terms of gender politics this discourse is dubious, as bargaining gender conformity for sexual acceptance must be short-lived. As Anne Fausto-Sterling (1992) notices, social rejection (and fear) of same-sex desire inevitably works against gender equality (and vice versa). Also Anne Marie Smith (1994) shows to us that by examining the interplay of contradictions in the Thatcherite discourse about "promotion of homosexuality" we come to the conclusion about the unstable and impossible consistency of what is denoted as "normal". "With the play of contamination and dependency between the two terms, the distinction between the 'normal' and 'not-normal' ultimately fails and so on" (1994, 202).

### **8.1.1 Nationhood, respectability and homosexuality**

Another inspiration for the interpretation of the "Let Them See Us" campaign comes from the already introduced work of George Mosse (1985) about middle class, nationalism and homosexuality. Here I would like to develop a thread around his concept of "respectability", characteristic of the emerging new social class (bourgeoisie), being in the Polish case the consequence of adopting the neoliberal capitalist economic system and Western European style of liberal democratic state organisation, and the qualities of self-determination, independence, resourcefulness, commitment, and, last but not least, normality. Lesbian and gay people are the same not only because they fulfil their socially prescribed gender normative expressions correctly, but also because they perform well the new ideals of a "good life" in the new, capitalist and democratic Poland. Kosci (2003) recalls Andrzej Oseka, a well-known journalist and commentator in Poland:

Some liberal commentators indicated that local authorities' reactions were a result of intolerance. Andrzej Oseka wrote in *Gazeta Wyborcza* that homosexuals "are not followers of some caprice or fashion; they are living people next to us. They work, study, love, and are loved. We usually know nothing about them. But this time, quite a number of these people came out toward passers-by in Polish cities. No provocative poses here.

Further in his article, Kosci quotes one of the participants saying: "We agreed to take part in this project in order to show that we are a part of society. We don't want to be a bad part of it. We're normal." The two accounts are fairly uncharacteristic one could say, it is as if they were not descriptions at all. But this is exactly what they are meant to be, I argue: suggesting the indistinguishable quality of the subjects portrayed. As a visibility campaign meant to hide lesbian and gay people into the invisibility of normality, so did the recurring uncharacteristic descriptions mean to render them into the usual of invisible normality. In another article we read:

Photographs are positive, gentle. Young, smiling and happy people. Is this a true depiction of Polish homosexuals? - We've chosen simplicity for a purpose. We want to gently introduce ourselves to passers-by - says Robert Biedron from the Campaign Against Homophobia, which organised the action. - We show normal people in ordinary situations, as if they've just popped in to the corner shop to buy bread. (wyborcza.pl 2003b)

It has been already noted that all portraits were shot in metropolitan centres, with young professional looking people, confident, assertive but not pushy, determined, committed and motivated (to take courage and do what they did). In the two following fragments taken from interviews given by organisers and campaign participants, we learn more about these qualities.

I don't feel guilty or worse than others because of my sexual difference - Daria says assertively. - Perhaps I'm even better in a sense, because I'm doing quite well in life. Daria is 24 years old, and is studying psychology. She wants to work as a negotiator in the future, as she likes challenges and high risk. - And then perhaps even more qualifications. Maybe a doctorate? - she considers. Her partner is finishing the same

programme. At the moment she is at home, in Przemyśl. - But we're in touch everyday - confesses Daria. - We text each other and send e-mails. We talk over the phone every few days as well. Daria is studying and working as a waitress. For the past four years she has had no financial support from anyone. - I'm getting by - she shrugs off. - I even have some pocket money left for small expenditures. (Uszynska 2003)

Daria emerges in this article as a young independent woman, getting by in life, which is not easy, but she does not complain. Lesbian and gay people can be, and are in this discourse, "professionals". "An assistant at the post office can be a lesbian (...) - a mate from work, or a neighbour can be gay. It is at least one million Poles!" (se.pl 2003). Daria's "professional" attitude is also tightly connected to her commitment to a monogamous, stable relationship, seen in the practice of staying in touch with her girlfriend. It should be explained to the English reader, who most likely assumes telephone services to be cheap, available in any household, and normal in their insignificance. In Poland, conversely, the significance is slightly different. At the time, in the 2003, mobile phones were still a novelty, a rather expensive one, and not affordable for everyone. Likewise, the poor telecommunication infrastructure inherited after communism, made the telephone something to be used when needed rather than a means of sustaining a social relationship via e.g. long conversations. Similarly, Internet access was scarce and restricted to public services (e.g. universities or slowly emerging internet cafes) and certainly not something that was present in every household. Therefore, Daria's remark about committed exchange of text messages, emails and less frequent but regular phone calls should be understood as a sign of effort, commitment and investment put into the (monogamous) relationship with her girlfriend.

What rises to our attention here is the role of partnership/relationship<sup>xix</sup> itself in the image of a socially respectable person - monogamous, serious, and dedicated. Normal, one almost wants to say. "[Aska and Julia] have monogamous hearts, as do Jacek and Arek. They hate jumping from one arm to another. They want to be together. They are responsible. They get photographed to show others that here are two regular, normal, happy young women, even if life is not easy for

them" (Pietkiewicz 2003). Surely, "monogamous hearts" is yet another example of what is conceived here as normality. The heteronormative scaffolding of Daria's (and that of her interviewer) thinking about herself is further exemplified across the text by the use of the term partner not girlfriend; a name that cautiously (although to a limited degree, since nouns in Polish are not gender-neutral, as in English) downplays a more obvious same-sex referent of girlfriend. In Polish, as perhaps also in English, partner denotes greater stability and respectability that goes beyond youthful emotional instability and short-lived erotic fascination that may be characteristic for what dating (rather than living with) and girlfriend (rather than partner) denote. It also hints towards same-sex partnerships, which similarly to marriage, would be in this universe the ultimate sign of commitment, respect, and maturity. And as in marriage, partnership is also meant to signify the longevity of the relationship, as much as it downplays the sexual dimension of it. This is again explicit in the following passage:

"We love each other normally". So our homos are ordinary, in love, monogamous, live together in flats they own, have cats, write poems for each other. Arek to Jacek: "But I have a brother/ since recently/ came, hugged, caressed/ and just like that, grew to love/ my difference/ I know, he doesn't mind/ Now we fight together/ I feel it/ enormous wonderful strength/ You don't have a chance/ it's love". And Jacek gives a photo to Arek: "Believe in me, and then our moments will become eternal. Be such a moment for me". They were in many different relationships, which didn't last. Now, they believe, they will succeed. Arek is monogamous in the depth of his heart. He always wanted a stable and long-lasting relationship/partnership. So did Jacek. They are not interested in sex without feelings. (Pietkiewicz 2003)

The clearest message about the "respectable homosexual subject" came from Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka, at the time a Plenipotentiary for Equal Rights in the government. She said:

If we are dealing with people of the same sex who have spent a huge part of their lives together, own a house together, then why should we refuse them, e.g. the right to information about a partner in hospital, or inheritance after death. There are no objections to a homosexual person working as a surgeon, teacher, or pedagogue. (...) In labour and

unemployment law it is forbidden to discriminate against anyone because of their "sexual orientation". That's some progress. (se.pl 2003)

For Jaruga-Nowacka, lesbians and gays are valued for their dutiful performance of bourgeois ideals of "good life" and "respectability". For that, they have been recognised under labour code regulations and offered protection against discrimination... in the work place. This initiative from the only EU directive (2000/78/EC) (Council of Europe 2000) forcing protection for homosexuals, but only in the work place, is a rather bold example of how homosexual subjects are being increasingly recognised under neoliberal capitalism as perhaps worthy, that is productive, contributors to the economy ("pink money" and "human capital"). Similar observations about "Let Them See Us" are made by Blazej Warkocki, who offers the following explanation of the strong reactions of many conservative commentators (e.g. Marszewsky 2003; se.pl 2003; Hannelowa 2003; Kwiecinski 2003) to the campaign. With a satirical wit he writes:

Lesbian and gay people from Karolina Bregula's photographs try to appropriate middle-class bourgeois aesthetics, while the society with the help of its conservative commentators replies: never, over our dead bodies! The bourgeois aesthetic belongs to us and we'll never give up on it! You have your own aesthetics, and that's why - until the end of the world - we will publish in "Wprost" [conservative weekly] photos from Berlin's "Love Parade" after the Polish Equality March. And there will be loads of pink plastic dildos, ballroom gowns, leather and other fetish stuff. We shall never see you in suits, never ever! (Warkocki 2006)

The intrinsic connection between citizenship claims, implanted capitalist social divisions and the rise of a "new middle class" in Poland, and LGBT organisations deployment of "respectability" as a major strategy, is quite striking. There is a developing current in queer studies, undertaking the critique of neoliberalism and sexual normativity in the long established capitalist countries of the "West" (e.g. D. Evans 1993; Chasin 2000; Hennessy 2000; Puar 2002; Duggan 2004; Richardson 2005; Woltersdorff 2007; Binnie 2008). Different authors emphasize issues that foster each other reflections. D'Emilio (1993), for instance, built an

interesting genealogy arguing that it was the developing capitalism (shifting conditions of labour, and reconfiguration of familial bonds) in "Western" countries that enabled the constitution of the homosexual as subject. Evans offered a Marxist critique of "sexual citizenship", under which he understood homosexual subject's participation and recognition by the state institutions. For him, "sexual citizenship" is in the buying power of "pink money": one is a citizen as long as one is able to participate in a capitalist/consumerist culture (Evans 1993, 64). Hennessy (2000), on the other hand, notices how the politics of visibility, so important a strategy for LGBT politics, seem to go hand in hand with capitalist insistence on consumption. Also, Chasin (2000) and Duggan (2004) are preoccupied with the "gay lifestyle" as another commodity product available on the market, perhaps diminishing a little the differences between the "gay" and the "straight" subject (as long as they buy!), but ameliorating divisions in the register of richness and poverty, access to services and goods, racialised positionality, etc.

Volker Woltersdorff (2007) draws an interesting observation regarding nationalism, sexuality and the neoliberal discourse of the EU:

While religious fundamentalists, nationalists and racists unanimously reject both homosexuality and neoliberalism, official neoliberal discourse in the European Union includes tolerance of homosexuality within its list of allegedly European values (Woltersdorff 2007, 1).

And later on argues:

On a global scale sexual emancipation is frequently linked to the profusion of neoliberalism, for example in Latin America, India and Southeast Asia. Very often queer people prefer neoliberal working conditions to more traditional ones because they enable them to live untraditional lives even if they don't earn more money they therefore, even unwillingly, often represent indeed a kind of vanguard of neoliberal transformation (Woltersdorff 2007, 3; see also Hennessy 2000).

Although I would be a little more cautious here than Woltersdorff regarding the scale of described processes, certainly there is a point in place that resonates well

with my observations. It is important, however, to not overestimate neoliberalism and capitalism. Reflecting upon Evans work, Angelia Wilson (2009) agrees that capitalism may regulate *homosexuality* in various ways, but as a single force, the market cannot fully determine it. She is speaking then with those who stress the importance of a deep intersectional approach to the study of sexuality (and I would add, nationhood) as the most productive approach towards greater understanding of the complexity of relations between social forces. Wilson's voice also reminds us that capitalist over-determination is a trap into which Evans (and perhaps others as well) may fall, and is one that too easily denies agency to gay and lesbian people, making them passive objects of economic forces (Wilson 2009, 8). In the "Let Them See Us" case, I would suggest that however the range of choices may be predetermined by various social, cultural and economic conditions - gay and lesbian people are not solely docile bodies, puppets in the neoliberal theatre. Rather, they show pro-active wilfulness to harness the mechanisms of a new regime; rather than spend (for which they may still be too poor, if we consider the massive pauperisation of society as the outcome of the "post-communist transformation") they are surely counting on some "earnings" as well.

To summarise this section, the set of discussed problems brings to mind once again the work of George Mosse (1985). In Chapter 4, while acknowledging his importance, I have also proposed a more critical reading of his work in the Central and Eastern European setting. However, in the particular context of the "Let Them See Us" campaign and in light of what I have written so far, it seems that Mosse's work on the rise of the middle class and nationalism, and its disdain for homosexuality, may be very relevant. For the author, respectability and nationalism are intertwined through normative gender ideals (predominantly manliness), as visible especially in the set of rules accepted and performed by "insiders", with their abnormal Double projected on those outside of the national community. Mosse notices that although standards of behaviour are common, one particular convention - respectability - even if present in earlier periods, became the sign particular to the 19th century. It is for him an effect of shifting



economic modes of production, resulting in rapid industrialisation of "Western" societies, and in consequence, shifting social stratification. Particularly the rise of the middle class as the new formation is important, as "respectability", aside from economic characteristic, became, according to Mosse, the most significant element distinguishing the newly emerged social class from the working class and aristocracy. Moreover, "respectability" was a middle class response to the very conditions that gave birth to it; amid rapid changes after the 1989 and general insecurity of the unknown and unpredictable conditions of social and economic organisation, it was "respectability" which, according to Mosse, was meant to provide a sense of stability and rootedness (Mosse 1985, 4-9). We find similar traits in the above analysis, which suggest that "Let Them See Us" deploys an intense and rather narrow understanding of the gender norm, through redeployment of which it tries to re-inscribe homosexual subjects, taking them out from the domain of the outsider/object into the familiar and acceptable subject position of insiders. As I wrote at the beginning of this chapter, it can be argued that the social and cultural unrest in Poland after 1989 bears similarities with the social and cultural turmoil as the outcome of the hasty industrialisation in Western Europe in the 19th century. A feeling of volatility and of the unfamiliar was not uncommon for people across generations. In this sense, extending and inscribing LGBT strategies into the discourse of respectability was/is a means of tapping into the socially recognised and cherished national characteristic, to secure themselves a place at the table of the nascent new Poland. As Mosse argues for nationalism, being the force embracing middle class ideals of gender and respectability, eventually helping to spread them across the range of other social classes, so I am arguing that we should read "Let Them See Us" as a campaign that at a very deep level performs, uses, and subsumes itself into the national discourse of Polishness.

Mosse extends his argument further to indicate how sexuality was downplayed in this process, "stripped of sensuousness", in place of which marriage and family life as practice of virtue were established. In his words:

Nationalism helped control sexuality, yet also provided the means through which changing sexual attitudes could be absorbed and tamed into respectability. In addition, it assumed a sexual dimension of its own, coming to advocate a stereotype of supposedly “passionless” beauty for both men and women (Mosse 1985, 10).

In the light of Mosse’s words, we need to understand the stress on monogamous and stable relationship created in the discourse of the campaign as an implicit way of becoming the national through the particular performance of the (good) homosexual. Because, as Mosse writes, normality does not only exist as an independent category, but is fixed as the “quality of the national” (1985, 13).

### **8.1.2 Reading “Let Them See Us” otherwise**

So far in my reading of the “Let Them See Us” campaign, I have critically assessed its working and possible side effects it could bring about. But I do not want to leave the reader with the sole impression that it cannot be read otherwise. As in the previous chapter I have argued that homosexual subjects’ mourning after the death of Poland’s homophobic president could be seen as regressive practice, but nonetheless I have offered its opposite, subversive understanding, in this chapter this seems to be other way round. Being critical so far, I now want to suggest that my case study can, and indeed, should also be valorised positively.

Looking back at the decade that has passed since 2002 I wonder if the “Let Them See Us” brought about changes that perhaps were not/could not be foreseen at the moment of its conception. Indeed, I believe that in consequence, it brought about some important changes to the discourse of homosexuality in Poland. My first observation is that it cracked the culturally sanctioned discourse of silence surrounding sexuality in Poland (Ritz 2002). The campaign, although initially intended for outdoor billboards, has actually never happened in this form, and became a media campaign through its extensive coverage across a range of outlets. What is more important, it was not just a scornful acknowledgement as e.g. gay prides had been so far, but a discourse consisting of full articles and interviews, giving voice and opportunity to the spokespersons of the campaign to get their message across.

I would also suggest that being the first campaign of such seize, it accelerated the process of cultural reworking of social attitudes towards homosexuality in Poland. For example, in 2002/2003 *"Gazeta Wyborcza"* the biggest and main daily newspaper (self-proclaimed central-left) was still publishing outspokenly homophobic and derogatory articles alongside those calling for tolerance and e.g. same-sex partnerships, all in the twisted name of objectivity and balanced discussion (although it would never publish anti-Semitic or racist texts) (Sypniewski and Warkocki 2004). Towards the end of the decade, not only was homophobia sidelined along with anti-Semitism and racism as an absolute "no go" discourse; but the newspaper actually embraced pro-active stances, actively campaigning for equality for gays and lesbians (e.g. coming out campaigns co-organised with Campaign Against Homophobia and Lambda) (Pacewicz 2008). Similarly, when in 2005 Lech Kaczynski (then still Mayor of Warsaw) banned for the second time Pride Parade, the protesters with many prominent politicians from left and centre sides of the political scene, marched against the mayoral ruling, committing acts of civil disobedience in the name of freedom and democracy, and against the ideological and religiously motivated decisions. These would not have happened if the public debate about the place of homosexual people in society was not already well under way. Of course, to assign such social change just to one campaign would be erroneous, and surely they are the outcome of the steady, everyday labour of LGBT organisations and gay and lesbian people themselves, in forging new frontiers of their presence in the public space. However, as I have said, I believe the "Let Them See Us" campaign has significantly contributed to this process, hence it deserves its positive recognition and not only critical assessment (and stressing that one does not cancel out the other and that both assessments are of equal value).

When thinking about different ways of looking at the LGBT movement in Poland and the possibilities of its assessment, I am reminded of Jeffrey Weeks' argument about two moments in the "Western" history of the LGBT movement (Weeks 1998). Weeks argues "that the new sexual movements of the past generation, particularly feminism and the lesbian and gay movement, have had

two characteristic elements: a moment of transgression, and a moment of citizenship" (Weeks 1998, 36). If the former was more "revolutionary" and about difference, the latter marks a return to claims of sameness. When looking at my case study, the opposite can be said: the Polish LGBT movement started from this latter "moment of citizenship" (as in the predominant mainstream framework of sexual politics in the 1990, the so called gay rights approach). However, it was indeed a "moment of transgression" and an initial one in the Polish circumstances, rather than the "development" as in Weeks' account of the "Western" model. This is therefore an interesting example of "temporal disjunction" that impacts on the sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe, and is very much at the roots of discourses of advancement and backwardness as, respectively, assigned to the "West" and the "CEE" (Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011a; Kulpa 2012b). This case of possible contradictory, yet simultaneous, moments, shapes the vision of sexual politics in Poland, and is exemplified precisely by the "Let Them See Us" campaign, as an object of further analysis in the Joanna Mizielinska's article (2011, 89–91).

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In summary, I would like to offer the reader the following thought. If we agree with Michel Billig (1995) and others that nation and nationalism are performative, discursive practices constantly bringing nation to life in the smallest and least significant practices - would it be right to suggest that "Let Them See Us" is an example of such "everyday nationalism" in its insistence on culturally sanctioned "normality" (acted through the embodiment of normative ideals of gender and respectability)? A similar argument is made by Tom Boellstorff (2005) in a different context. Writing about Indonesia, he observes that homosexual subjects' enactment of socially normative lives centred around family and familial gender roles means that they are becoming building blocks of that very society. They are becoming "authentic citizens who will be recognized by the nation". This is so because, as he further explains, sexuality and gender are crucial and rather immutable characteristics of any national identity (Boellstorff 2005, 199).

It is also worth recalling Anne Marie Smith's writing on the New Right discourse about race and homosexuality in Great Britain, offering again important conclusions, which seem to correspond to my case. She makes the important point about the "positive images" strategy, which we saw deployed in the "Let Them See Us" campaign. Smith argues, and I would like to concur with her, that engagements based on such a strategy are always only partially effective. Moreover, they are also always partially counter-effective towards the campaigner's set goals. "Positive images", to put it metaphorically, soothe the symptoms, but do not treat the illness and that which caused its development. They work on the effects of systematic exclusion, but do not tackle the cause and mechanisms of inequality. As Smith puts it:

'Positive images' offer an interpretation of homophobic discourse, and construct a counter-discourse, but they do not interrupt the entire process whereby the coherence of a political project is established through the construction of demon figures, the investment in that process remains unchallenged (Smith 1994, 191).

The counter-discourse gets caught in what Smith calls "evidence games": "[a]lthough we may think that we are resisting the original truth claiming by providing counter-evidence, we may actually be reinforcing the game itself" (Smith 1994, 192). This process of the reiterative politics of claims echoes Sara Ahmed's concept of the "hopeful performative" (2010, 200) that is, the performative power of repetition that renders the desired idea into a "state of reality". In the previous chapter, I have shown how in "extraordinary times" (the catastrophic death of the President) this was used by the homoseusal subjects to re-inscribe themselves into the discourse of Polishness. In this chapter, I want to strengthen the previous point by showing how similar processes could be observed already a few years before. It seems that the need to belong to the imagined community of the nation not as outcasts but as "proper citizens" may be one of the underpinning desires and psychosocial driving forces within the gay and lesbian community and behind LGBT activism in Poland. So, as Mosse claims the industrialisation of Western European societies brought about the rise of the

middle class, characterised by a "respectability" that became inextricably linked to nationalism, here I have presented a reverse process. National discourse establishes norms of "respectability", which are espoused by LGBT campaigners, in order to integrate homosexual subject into the "Polish national family". This ambitious goal is sought through performing respectability and establishing homosexual subjects as middle class subjects in times of rapid transformations in Poland post-1989. And the circle is closed.

## **8.2 "Want Tolerance? So Choose One!" (2006)**

With the previous campaign, we were in the historical time of pre-accession, before the EU enlargement in 2004. Two years later, in 2006, when "Want Tolerance? So Choose One!" was rolled out, the trust invested in the EU was still in place, and it was perhaps even more fuelled up by the coming to power of the conservative, populist, religiously motivated political parties of the far right. In 2005 the Law And Justice Party (the Kaczynski twins, one of whom became a president, and the other one was soon to become a Prime Minister) had won parliamentary elections, forming a coalitional government with the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence. This was a tense moment for the lesbian and gay communities in Poland, adding to the already intensified atmosphere of homophobia. As I have mentioned earlier, Lech Kaczynski - as Mayor of Warsaw - had made homophobic discourse a part of his political strategy, one that successfully contributed to his victorious electoral campaign to the seat of the President of Poland. So when his party, Law And Justice, won parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government with two other far right parties, the prospects for the lesbian and gay communities seemed rather gloomy. As Ireneusz Krzeminski summarises it in his book:

there is no doubt that the political atmosphere [of that time] had a significant influence on the experiences of LGBT people. Hateful and depreciative political language had significantly influenced the hostile and aggressive behaviours against the sexual minorities (Krzemiński 2009, 70).

In a situation like this, where internal politics turns ugly, it is easy to imagine that LGBT groups would turn towards the EU even more as the perceived last refuge from outspokenly homophobic national government.

So when local elections were approaching in November 2006, it is perhaps not a surprise that LGBT organisations got engaged. The object of my second analysis is the campaign "Want Tolerance? So choose one!" prepared by Lambda Warszawa Association. In the words of its organisers:

the project is addressed to LGBT people. Its goal is to encourage gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals to take part in local elections and vote wisely. It is the beginning of the greater Lambda's initiative to build among us, LGBT people, consciousness of civil society" (homiki.pl 2006).

It was an outreach activity with posters put in places frequented by gay and lesbian people (bars, clubs, coffee bars, "gay friendly" venues).



Figure 9: "Want Tolerance? So Choose One"

The poster reads: **"Want Tolerance? So Choose One/Leave"**. In smaller font under "choose" we read: **"Make wise [lit. conscious] choices"**. How does this speak to traditional Polishness?

In this second case I want to make three points and suggestions. Firstly, I want to suggest that the action in a striking way habituates the "Traditional Polishness" framework of reference discussed in Chapter 5. The case redeploys the "Stay, Fight, and Sacrifice!" discourse coupled with the "Shame And Indignity!" discourse to those who reject this collectivist call over individual choice. This traditional discourse of Polishness is used to mobilise the Polish gay and lesbian communities to embrace their civic duty/privilege of voting. Secondly, I propose that the organisers seem to accept the neoliberal politics proposed by the Civic Platform (the neoconservative contender for Law And Justice to power). In doing so, they create the (yet) uncharted fields of possible further marginalisation of "other" sexualities. Finally, as in the previous case, I also offer this case study as a possible instance of "banal nationalism"/"everyday nationalism".

### **8.2.1 Poland Needs You!**

In Chapter 5 I wrote about the historical and cultural formations of Polish nationhood. I pointed out a few characteristic tropes threading through the ever-changing discourses of the nation across the years. One of the most important is without doubt the obligation to fight what is seen as the oppressor (Germans, Russians, communists...), a never-ending quest for freedom and sovereignty. A true Pole must be ready to sacrifice individual happiness if necessary, and always bravely face the challenge. The shame of treason, that is not responding to the homeland's call to arms, is worse than death, and so the fight should not be feared (cf. Chapter 5).

I would argue that such Romantic ideas of narcissistic martyrology (Janion 2000; Zieliński 2002; Ziarek 2007) - are the main trope of the "Want Tolerance?" campaign. The choice of wording, graphics, and theme - contrasting two supposed possibilities of action offered to gay and lesbian communities - redeploys the traditional Polish rhetoric of fight with the oppressor (LGBT vs.



homophobic government), self-sacrifice for the greater cause (LGBT for future generations of LGBT and lofty ideas) and shameful treason (shameless emigrants to UK). The campaign helps us to understand how nationhood may be woven into the narrative of homosexuality in Poland. When we read in the accompanying article that "forthcoming elections appear to be more important than ever", organisers set the event beyond the usual significance of elections. The potential reader, an ordinary homosexual person, is encouraged to vote through positive arguments about the importance of voting, as much as s/he is discouraged from not doing so through a discourse of shame, bravery, and duty. "So if you are unsatisfied, complain to politicians about the situation in the country, vote! There is no other solution. Of course, you can always leave, but is that a solution, and why should I/we leave?" (homiki.pl 2006).

The graphic representation of the supposed options, in its simplicity, disqualifies and shames one of them (notably: leaving the country), leaving (!) the homosexual subject with no choice but to vote. Three elements of the poster seem to indicate this: greyed out graphics, slightly smaller font, and the depiction of a person with a suitcase, incomplete, as if cut through, hence partially out of sight. This stylistic manoeuvre, in comparison to strong robust outlines and colours of choosing, "help" the reader not to choose leaving as an option (which appears as less appealing, thus less significant and less important), by directing the viewer's attention to the more robust and eye-catching option (voting). Indeed, the organisers accuse those who think about leaving Poland, or have already done so, or who simply did not vote in previous elections, when stating directly: "So those who did not vote in 2005 actively contributed to the victory of Law And Justice, League of Polish Families and Self-Defence" (which of course is true to a certain degree). So the trope of national survival and the struggle for freedom, for national sovereignty and dignity, is translated into the current situation of lesbian and gay people in 2006, as struggling for survival in a homophobic culture, for freedom of self-expression, individual sovereignty and personal dignity. Thus, what was typical for the national discourse became characteristic for the homosexual one, making the two alike.

What I have shown so far is the persistence of the national in the LGBT organisation's discourse. As in the previous chapter I want to indicate that the two discourses are not necessarily mutually exclusive (although this is often the case). Indeed, I want to insist not only on the complexity of the underlying relation(ship)s between the nationhood and the homosexuality, but also I want to suggest that often they rely on each other. As in the "Want Tolerance?" campaign, which puts its confidence in a concept of "Traditional Polishness" to mobilize gay and lesbian community for greater engagement in the democratic processes (to eventually overcome the obstacle of the nationalistic discourse rejecting homosexuality as Other).

Some major questions emerge here. Does this reliance on the national framework in this campaign mean it is necessarily nationalistic (in the negative sense of the word)? I suppose it all depends on our own, personal perspective and moral evaluation of nationalism, hence I leave it to the reader. Moreover, we should also ask a more fundamental question here: is it possible to envisage any social action as not always already pre-defined/pre-coded as national? This is a problem that tightly adheres to the taken-for-granted in queer studies, the framing of locality through the boundaries and borders of a nation-state (Kulpa 2011). For instance, the recently published book *"Queer in Europe"* (Downing and Gillett 2011) aims to queer what is invoked by the name of Europe. Consequently one would wish to see more attention given by its editors and authors to such concepts as Europe, region, nation, state, (nation-)state, and not only queer. In this context, the representation of European diversity conceived as the collection of nation-state case studies of sexuality, counterposed to "America" (which is implicitly framed as not only hegemonic and homogenising, but also a homogeneous country/region) is problematic. Would this suggest that we replicate sometimes the mechanisms of domination and subordination, when perhaps too easily and too quickly counter the globalization and American hegemony with the national as an alternative? Can we think about a cultural, geographical, political, etc. "diversity in locality" outside the over-determined category of a nation-state as an organizing principle? (cf. also Kulpa 2011)

### **8.2.2 “Lesser evil”?: Exclusions and dangers of “banality”**

Continuing on a more self-reflexive note from the previous section, let me begin here by acknowledging that the following critical analysis is not motivated by (rather tame) presumption that nation(hood)alism is bad. Instead, my criticism stems rather from a caring personal investment in scrutinised issues. As someone who was left behind as an unworthy (gay) citizen (after all, I decided to leave and not to stay and fight) I understand now better than ever before what dangers, traps and their sometimes painful consequence redeployment of the national framework in the LGBT discourse may bring about. When I was a Lambda volunteer (2002-2004) co-organising many events and projects, contributing myself to that which I analyse now (although not directly to this campaign), I was not as conscious of various workings of power and exclusion as I am now. Therefore I want to use my current possibility of reflexive re-assessment of organisational LGBT politics, and give back to the communities, which contributed to my shaping as a person, and as a researcher. The criticism I offer is thus an alarm call, bringing attention to issues, which I believe are not widely discussed among gay and lesbian communities and in the Polish LGBT activism. To change this, I hope to translate this work, and publish it in Poland, sharing my insights with others, and hopefully stimulating a discussion around the raised issues.

Above, I discussed the possible negative effects of neoliberal market capitalism on the lives of many people who do not “make it to the top”. I want to continue this thread below, showing how age and generational belonging, as well as the metropolitan location of organisers influence and narrow the angle of the “Want Tolerance?” campaign. The campaign urges gay and lesbian people not only to vote, but also to “choose wisely”. What is the wise choice that the organisers suggest we make? After all, we are not explicitly told who to vote for. However, as I will show, there is a very specific voting option implied in this supposedly insignificant encouragement. In the accompanying article we read:

It is well worth, more! - it is necessary to vote - because it is the only way to change the matrix around us. (...) We need to realise a fundamental truth. When we are not voting, in truth, we vote for the opponent. In my opinion, even if one does not know exactly who to vote for, but knows that they do not want certain parties [to win], *one should choose a lesser evil*, and vote for a party or a person that is otherwise most suitable for us (homiki.pl 2006, my italics).

Since there is nothing wrong with encouraging people to vote, one interpretation of what "making wise choices" could mean is to do with the major choice: staying in the country and voting (striking back against homophobic government) or leaving (cowardly). In this case, we can see an emerging space of more harmful discourse arising; one that divides gay and lesbian people into "good and voting" and "bad and leaving". It is only a possibility here, an allusion rather than an active pursuit of such a rift; yet still, the fact that an opportunity for such negative discourse could arise, is unsettling. And such segregation can arise because it relies on the traditional national discourse, which in all its queerness and internal instability (perhaps even inconsistency), is nonetheless, a discourse of the Sameness and Otherness, inclusion and exclusion. So to bring back some thoughts from the concluding paragraphs to the previous section, redeployment of the national discourse in the LGBT campaign, even if organised to put off the homophobic far right government, is nonetheless reinstalling the very discourse that enabled those parties to come to power in the first instance. Thus, the campaign plays high stakes in this game; and I am just not sure if it is worth a risk.

But there is another possibility of understanding the call to "choose wisely", one that is only hinted at in the quoted article, but perhaps of equal importance. The Polish sentence "wybieraj swiadomie", literally meaning "choose consciously", points towards the choice that is conscious of the future consequences of the act. Reminding ourselves about the cultural and political context of that time, of the stuffy and tense atmosphere of publicly sanctioned homophobia, the sentence "wybieraj swiadomie" should rather be translated as "make wise choices" - choices that are useful and strategic. Although neither the poster nor the article directly indicates who to vote for, they are actually pointing

out whom not to vote for (homophobic Law And Justice); thus "wise" means being effective in not allowing Law And Justice to win once again. Consequently, this implicitly indicates the choice of the major (and effectively the only possible) contender to governmental power - Civic Platform. Why is that?

In the 2005 elections, when the Social Democratic government collapsed, the two major opposition (right wing) parties were the populist and nationalist Law And Justice and the neoliberal and pro-capitalist, but morally just as conservative, Civic Platform. In 2006, with Law And Justice already in power, the Left, mainly represented in Polish politics by Social Democrats, was significantly marginalised (losing support from 41% in 2001 to 11,3% in 2005 elections),<sup>xx</sup> proving itself to be only a weak third contender, after the Civic Platform. It should now become a little more clear that the "Want Tolerance?" campaign has, after all, a particular political agenda (against Law And Justice, in favour of the major contender, Civic Platform), even if it is not explicitly expressed.

Perhaps now is the time to ask why the vote in favour of the Civic Platform is perhaps a tricky and a dangerous alliance for the LGBT organisers. What is wrong with strategic/"wise" voting for the "lesser evil" and against the party that is opposed to LGBT specific interests, even to their existence? The short answer is: Civic Platform's neoliberal economic agenda (that has negative consequences on many gay and lesbian communities), and moral conservatism (which do not ameliorate outspoken homophobic discourse, however, gives silent permission for its existence).

As already mentioned, Civic Platform is a party favouring the neoliberal capitalist market economy, while retaining conservative values at heart. The most straightforward comparison would be Tories under Thatcher's leadership. So why was Civic Platform, although as morally conservative as Law And Justice, perceived as the "lesser evil"? One of the issues that plays a significant role is ageism and the generational divide. I have already shown in Chapter 7 that between "younger activists" and "older politicians" there is a generational divide making it difficult to find a common language between the LGBT organisations

and their addressees, politicians (and society at large). In this case, ageism of the LGBT organisations is a factor worth considering once again.

As noted, LGBT activists are mainly in their twenties and thirties, students, young professionals, in major urban agglomerations of Poland. They occupy a rather privileged social and cultural position, but also economic one. They are the first generation of Poles brought up under the new regime of a capitalist economy, hence possibly finding it easier (than older generations of Poles, also homosexual ones but not activists or from outside of the described position of privilege) to navigate their lives in the maze of demands, rules and regulations of market economy and liberal democracy. Being already socialised into neoliberal capitalism, it becomes a fairly invisible that's-how-things-are backdrop of LGBT activists' practices. What is problematic here is the LGBT activists' lack of consideration of inequality as an intersectional and multi-faceted social problem, one that always interweaves sexuality with other identity positions (like gender, access to education and hence career prospects thus ability to live a fulfilling life, religious beliefs, and rootedness in other communities/identities/identifications, etc.). Since the "Want Tolerance?" campaign is meant to mobilise lesbian and gay communities into voting, to cease the overwhelming political homophobia and ultimately bring about social change and diminish inequality - "wise" deployment of strategies that implicitly support neoliberal party (and its politics characteristic of, and based on economic inequalities and increased divisions), is problematic. It may lead to a situation where certain gay and lesbian people will feel abandoned or left on their own (by activists who claim to work in their name), precisely because they do not occupy a similar, fairly privileged subject position to that of an "activist". Indeed, this is not only a possibility but also the case. In the 2008 report from the extensive and nation-wide sociological research into lives of gay and lesbian communities in Poland, the division between the older and younger generation of homosexual people (Krzeminski 2009, 81 and 85–86), between those living in rural and provincial, and metropolitan areas (Krzeminski 2009, 69), are clear. Krzeminski's research confirms my anxieties that LGBT politics in the form of the campaign analysed here, is dangerously close to re-inscribing social

divisions within own group, even if it seeks to abolish those divisions between themselves and the whole society. So it is necessary to think across identity positions rather than focus activities only on one factor (homosexuality) in the struggle for equality. Following Diane Richardson, we should not forget about the hidden politics of the equal rights pledge. Equal to whom, she asks; with whom do LGBT activists want to be equal? Straight women with the double burden of a "professional career" and household chores? Ageing and unemployed populations of small villages and provincial towns? Straight men, but from lower working milieus, struggling to support their families in the ever-changing and harsh conditions of neoliberal market capitalism? The list could go on and on... By asking this simple question, we draw our attention to the implicit gender, ethnic, ageist, metropolitan (and possibly many others) underpinnings of the pledge, confirming again the need for cautious framings of sexual politics (Richardson 2000, 82). Otherwise, we will be observing (as the process is already in place) a growing detachment and alienation between activists and "ordinary people" in gay and lesbian communities (Glowania 2009, 258–265).

So the open question, to which there is no easy answer, remains: taking the above into consideration is it worth choosing the "lesser evil" of the neoliberal Civic Platform? Likely sacrificing other spheres of our lives in the name of sexual identity? It is also very clear here why even the strategic essentialism of LGBT politics is troublesome. The non-reflexive (in terms of acknowledging economic and other factors, not only sexuality) case of "Want Tolerance?" is then an opportunity for me to reflect on the precarious conditions of sexual politics in Poland. And in a critical, but supportive manner, I offer its analysis for a thoughtful consideration about the role of economic market conditioning in post-1989 Poland, the emerging LGBT movement, and sexual politics on the crossroads of the discourses of the nationhood and homosexuality.

Apart from the missing intersectional consideration of economic factors, I think it was also a misinterpretation of Civic Platform's silence (well, comparatively to Law And Justice and its coalition, League of Polish Families) regarding homosexuality that led campaigners to straightforwardly accept the

"lesser evil" of Civic Platform. Two things could contribute to this silence. First, Civic Platform's pro-European stance; where the discourse of the EU is officially concerned with all forms of discrimination, including one based on sexual orientation, the party would risk alienation (that the Law And Justice government suffered) on the European scene, which is ultimately against its goals. Thus, this could stimulate the second reason: to embrace political correctness and not voice the moral or ethical stances too much in the public, refraining from the highly controversial issues (not only homosexuality, but also abortion, religion in schools, etc.). Additionally, in the discursive space where Law And Justice is framed as the ultimate evil, hence all other political powers must be by implication perceived if not as better, then at least as a lesser evil (such is the power of the better/worse, more/less, greater/lesser dialectics). Finally, Civic Platform's pro-EU politics must have resonated rather positively with the organisers of the "Want Tolerance?" campaign. As I have mentioned, the trust LGBT activists placed in the European Union as the guardian of minorities and tolerance could also create the impression that Civic Platform is like a proverbial devil, not so black as he's painted. But is it?

The trust in Civic Platform, which we are encouraged to feel by the "Want Tolerance?" campaign, its unproblematic acceptance of the "lesser evil" as the only solution, without pondering deeper-rooted possibilities, consequences and dangers of such politics, turned out to be a rather bitter lesson. Soon after Civic Platform's victorious local and then national elections, Janusz Kochanowski was appointed as the Human Rights Ombudsman, and Elzbieta Radziszewska as the government's Plenipotentiary for Equal Rights. Although holding two of the highest positions and obliged to work for tolerance and equality, and against discrimination and exclusion, both officials made numerous comments of a homophobic nature (Szulc 2011, 165; Mizielińska 2011, 88).



### **8.3 States of belonging: The question of “sexual citizenship”**

When looking at my case studies, one observation is that both campaigns do not seem to pay much attention to what impact they may have on the gay and lesbian communities. In 2003 we saw the struggle for national inclusion via the discourse of a good life based on some sort of normality, economic and cultural self-reliance, and building up the new middle class. In 2006, this discourse seemed to be also well under the skin of the organisers. As examples show, they use a regulatory and normalising discourse that may (and should) be seen in relation to a more broadly defined “post-communist transformation” in Poland and CEE. What emerged in the analysis are the tropes that indicate neoliberalism and its economic, political and cultural politics (Duggan 2002, 177) to be a considerable backdrop of the LGBT activism in Poland. It should, however, be contextualised in the particular national history, otherwise the critique we hope to perform may miss the point. Should we not account for the geo-temporal, cultural, national, regional... specificity, we risk running generalising arguments that may not hold their validity, thus even fail in their purpose (cf. my discussion of “modernity” in Chapter 4). In the former case of the “Let Them See Us” campaign, we observe a form of self-governance to fit the bill of a “good citizen” as redefined according to the new neoliberal agenda introduced in Poland after 1989. In the latter case of “Want Tolerance?”, neoliberal politics is also taken for granted in the unquestioned acceptance of Civic Platform as a “lesser evil”. What I find problematic is the lack of acknowledgement from the LGBT organisations that inequality of lesbian and gay people in society is an effect of not only prejudices against homosexuality, but is a manifold social problem encompassing many other factors of social positioning (age, place of living, education, employment status, etc.). The taken-for-grantedness of neoliberal economic and cultural politics is symptomatic here. As Richardson (2005) rightfully notes:

this is further compounded by the fact that the “politics of citizenship” is the dominant discourse in sexual politics. In this respect, contemporary lesbian and gay movements rely implicitly on neoliberal language/concepts, which may also help to explain why neoliberalism tends to be ignored or is hidden from view (Richardson 2005, 517).

The stress put by both campaigns on the issue of the respectability of homosexual subjects also remains highly problematic from many viewpoints. In the pursuit of proving their worth to the society and to themselves, the two campaigns irrevocably create a model of the normal gay person that would fit the “good citizen” bill. It is striking how well the words of Steven Seidman (2002) describe what the two case studies implicitly evoke. He writes:

A normal gay is expected to be gender-conventional, link sex to love and marriage-like relationship, defend family values, personify economic individualism, and display national pride. Although normalisation makes it possible for individuals to conduct lives of integrity, it also establishes a moral and social division among gays. Only normal gays who conform to dominant social norms deserve respect and integration. (...) And, as we'll see, the normal gay implies a political logic of tolerance and minority rights that does not challenge heterosexual dominance (Seidman 2002, 133).

In a similar vein and also noticing the lack of a challenge to heteronormativity, Bell and Binnie characterise good sexual citizenship as, “privatized, de-radicalized, de-eroticized and confined in all senses of the word: kept in place, policed, limited” (Bell and Binnie 2000, 3; see also Warner 1999; Richardson 2004). This self-restricting (in certain respects, of course) discourse of respectability (well rooted in the nationhood) opens a dangerous place in the LGBT discourse, a rupture where another division within the gay and lesbian communities may occur. For, as Carl Stychin (1998) argues, it is this very idea of respect that perpetuates the division between “good and bad gays”, facilitating further exclusions. And indeed, as Anna Gruszczynska shows in her work (2009a, 203), such divisions into “wanted good gays” and “unwanted bad queers” were the case during pride marches organised around the same time or later in Poland. It is a sad lesson (but perhaps not surprising if we take into consideration what I

said earlier about the dialectical process of identity construction) that for every "good gay" there will always be at least one "bad queer" (Smith 1994, 204-216). And this cautiously recalls Jeffrey Weeks' very optimistic article about the emerging "sexual citizens" (1998). There, he proclaimed that: "this new personage is a harbinger of a new politics of intimacy and everyday life" (Weeks 1998, 36). I certainly agree with Weeks in that lesbian and gay people (in my Polish cases) do embody some form of a new politics of intimacy and everyday life after 1989. However, now I would not be as optimistic as he is in this proclamation. And in thinking towards possible alternatives in the domain of sexual politics, in Poland or elsewhere, I would concur with Lisa Duggan (1994) who proposes a new type of sexual politics, as an alternative to gay rights/sexual citizenship politics of neoliberalism and nationhood. Such politics would not assert similarity and normality, but rather de-naturalize heteronormativity. The task would be to stop proving the normality of homosexuality; in Anne Marie Smith's terminology that would be to break the circle of "evidence games". Instead, Duggan insists on the need to engage sexual politics in the process of showing the non-normality of heteronormativity.

When we recall "sexual citizenship", we inevitably enter the arena of state and nationhood, and how the three contribute and constitute each other. This now leads me to my earlier suggestion that both case studies can serve as instances of "everyday nationalism"/"banal nationalism". If we share the sceptic/negative opinion about this ideology, this shift to the micro level in nationalism studies may provide an argument for the gloomy vision of nationalism as an all-encompassing discourse. Michael Billig (1995) argues that the opinion that nationalism is an external force relegated only to the peripheries of the political mainstream, and visible only during the spectacular and grand events is misleading. Nationalism continues to be so powerful because it remains at the very heart of politics, as hidden and unnoticed in obvious and banal acts of everyday life (Billig 1995, 5). But we should not be too quick in deprecating it only on the grounds of its supposed inevitability. For it may also be a platform to elevate some marginalised groups to (at least partially) another, perhaps better

(but not free from constraints) social status. I have tried to show how homosexual subjects in Poland - by means of the two LGBT campaigns - redeployed the discourse of the national, harnessing it (as much as they could) to their own purposes. Purposes that do not necessarily correspond to those that we usually (and after conservative appropriation) see as nationalistic. Therefore I would like to suggest that both campaigns do perform certain type of discourse that is derived from a wider national backdrop, a sort of "banal nationalism".

In "Let Them See Us" we saw a deployment of the "positive images" strategy. These "good images" were aimed at reconfiguring lesbian and gay men not as objects but as subjects through the insistence on their normality. They could appear as good lesbians and gays only due to their particular representation as good citizens in the emerging new neoliberal economic and political regime in Poland. This chain of equivalences and assumptions as to what is good (and implicitly bad) that ends up in the notion of a good citizen, is in my opinion a mechanism of assumption linked to the performance of "banal/everyday nationalism". In the "Want Tolerance?" campaign this banality of nationalism was present on two levels. Firstly, there was the utilization of "Traditional Polishness" about national fight, sacrifice and shame in the LGBT self-mobilisation campaign. Secondly, the unanimous acceptance of Civic Platform (even, or perhaps especially, as "lesser evil") as a political party that performs (and hence creates and sustains) the "post-1989" national discourse of new Poland as a neoliberal capitalist democracy. Billig is right then, when he writes:

National identity embraces all these forgotten reminders. Consequently, an identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life. (...) Because the concept of nationalism has been restricted to exotic and passionate exemplars, the routine and familiar forms of nationalism have been overlooked. In this case, 'our' daily nationalism slips from attention. (...) Nationhood is still being reproduced: it can still call for ultimate sacrifices; and, daily, its symbols and assumptions are flagged (Billig 1995, 8–9).

## ***Chapter 9***

### ***Conclusions***

In the opening paragraphs to his book about South Africa, William Spurlin writes (2006, 2):

The transition from apartheid to democracy has also opened up new spaces of “queer” visibility, identity politics, cultural production, and social critique both in South Africa and in the neighboring region. Though there is now a seriousness about lesbian and gay issues in South Africa in ways that were previously not possible (...), one must nonetheless concede that material conditions still mitigate against the fullest realization of ANC-initiated democratic imperatives and that the status of homosexuality in the region remains a highly complex and contradictory question.

His words could not better resonate with my own case of the Polish “post-communist transformation”. Political, economic, and cultural changes continue to impact on the notion of nationhood, and what it means to be Polish. Integral to the formation of the new Polish democracy was Solidarity - the workers’ movement for liberty and dignity that contributed to the collapse of the state communism in Poland and across CEE (Castle and Taras 2002). It soon became clear that the vision of a “new Poland” upheld by the new political elite was not shared by the masses. The religious uprooting of the governing elites (cf. Chapter 5) became both divisive and oppressive. This reminds of Partha Chatterjee’s (1993) observation national struggles for freedom often equated with oppression of some ‘other’ groups. As Spurlin further observes, it is very likely that these other groups will be women and homosexual people (2006, 11). This resonates with the Polish case, when anti-feminist and homophobic discourse and policies quickly found their speakers among political elites (Mizielinska 2001). It seemed that Polish nationhood and homosexuality were unconceivable together in any other way than as “deadly enemies” (Graff 2010). And this is where my story begins.

Much inspired by writing about transnational sexual politics, globalisation and localisation processes and by queer post-colonial studies (cf. discussions in Chapter 4), I was convinced that the relation between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality in post-1989 Poland must be more complex and nuanced than e.g. Graff (2010) suggests. Therefore, without denying the “deadly enemies” as one form of a relation(ship) (indeed, it is a focus of my analysis in Chapter 6), I set myself the task of looking at and finding what other forms of relating can be found, when we study instances of the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality and the ways that they relate to one another. Therefore across the thesis, I have paid attention to the undercurrents and internal dynamics, constantly negotiating and re-working mutual dependencies between the two discourses. In this context, I was particularly keen on exploring the “unforeseen” (or possible), the “wilful”, “unintended” (or hoped for) in the two discourses. To do so, I organised the thesis around three major research questions: (1) How is homosexuality framed by national discourse (when performed by the nation-state)? (2) How do discourses of homosexuality relate to nationhood (in times of national distress)? (3) How might national/ist rhetoric be present in discourses of LGBT organisations? Methodologically, the thesis is grounded in a case study approach and utilises discourse analysis. Overall, I argue that we may map out the relations between nationhood and homosexuality through discourses of “rejection” as well as “dependency”, oscillating on a continuum between “sameness” and “otherness”. These relations are best described via the concepts of “dislocation”, “belonging”, “attachment”, “narrating”, “forgetting”, “remembering”, and “disidentification”.

In this project, I deployed the notion of discourses as the practices of creating and sustaining meanings; practices of language, but also, and by no means less importantly, of material, economic, symbolic, visual and so on, characteristics. Discourses are practices and structures relating to and shaping the multiplicity of subjectivities we live in, and fixing them in temporary, if elusive (yet still, not less real or “true”) subject (and object, and abject) positions (“identity”). This stress on “identification” rather than on “identity” (cf. debates in

Chapter 2), on the mutuality of relations between the two discourses, rather than on the fixed matrix of domination/subordination, helped me to explore some of the complexities that could otherwise remain “hidden”/unrecognised. Of course I do not want to insinuate that the relation between the national and homosexual is value free, such a claim is simply unsustainable. However, in this thesis I found that there exists a space of flexibility and consequently of subversive *dislocation* in terms of the ways that homosexual subjects and LGBT organisations relate to nationhood (and vice versa).

I am reminded here of the concept of “mimicry”, which is very popular amongst post-colonial theorists. In its lay meaning, it denotes an act of copying that could be read as establishing an unequal relation between the assumed original, and its mimicry/copy. However, the undertaking that circulates within academe is much inspired by the writings of Homi Bhabha (2004 [1994]). He insists that any act of communication is never “full” or perfect in that the “original” message is always subject to the audience’s interpretation (and thus to the audiences modification). This incongruence is a space of slippage and potentiality and, as Bhabha argues in cases of relations between colonial masters and the colonised, of subversion and rebellion. Bhabha argues that in the process of colonialization something is lost (in “translation” of the colonial hegemonic authority onto local subdued contexts), and thus opens a space of potential rebellion by those who are subjugated. The “original”/dominant is rendered “hybrid”/ambivalent. It seems useful and possible for me to conceive the relation(ship)s between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality to be similar to that of the relationship between coloniser and colonised described by Bhabha. If that unequal relation was a point of departure for my study, I have analysed some case studies showing many tensions, incongruences, and ambivalences in and among discourses of the nationhood and homosexuality.

For example, in Chapter 6 I showed how the Others in relation to which a sense of Polish nationhood was defined are changing after 1989. This process seems to be continuous, fluctuating, and adapting, rather than based on rejection, abandonment, or total reconfiguration (as it was in the case of the change of

political and economic systems). I observed how homosexuality becomes one of the “new” Others in national discourse, and it seems an especially important Other, because of its discursive linking to the “old” Other (and still powerful, as it turns out) - Germany. In my analysis it emerged that whilst homosexuality is constructed in the nation-state’s discourses as dangerous and threatening, it is equally important and inseparable from that discourse, suggesting a form of “hybridization” of the national narrative. I use the concept of “supplement” to highlight how the national discourse is in fact a discourse of dependency where - beyond being the Other - homosexuality implicitly becomes the necessary Other. Indeed, homosexuality appears to be the figure/object of the national constitutive desire; thus it signifies the impossibility of achieving national identity (understood as any complete and stable acquisition).

Another case was analysed in Chapter 7, where I suggest that there is a great deal of importance given to national belonging by homosexual subjects (one that possibly goes beyond wish and need of, for example, legal regulations of same-sex coupledness). This was demonstrated through an analysis of the ways in which gays and lesbians mourned the death of the homophobic President Kaczynski. I read this as an act of subversive agency whereby homosexual subjects participated in the rituals of national bereavement as a way to seek inclusion into the national community. Referring back to debates and literature introduced in Chapter 2, I demonstrated how this seemingly paradoxical case, where some Polish gay and lesbian people publicly mourned the death of their outspokenly homophobic president, may be an example of identification rather than “identity”. The case shows that “gay and lesbian” identities, as well as those of “Pole” and also “homophobe”, are the effect of constant *disidentification* rather than permanently fixed. Here is a place of potential rift where some form of subversiveness may arise. “Mimicry” demonstrated by partaking in expressions of national bereavement is what constitutes and enables the wilfulness of the homosexual subjects. After Bhabha, himself clearly influenced by Foucault’s philosophy of power, we notice that it is possible, because:



Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power - hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth (Bhabha 2004, 157-8).

Suffice to say here that resistance or wilful subjectivity of homosexual subjects was particular here to the formation of a nation-state. Beriss (1996, 189) rightly points out that nations are not fixed monolithic actors driven by some *idée fixe*. Nations, we need to remember, are comprised of people engaged in everyday performances of everyday life (cf. debates in Chapter 3). With the insistence on relationality, processuality and performativity of identifications, we can understand the tie-up of nationhood and homosexuality, to be a wilful subversion of culturally and traditionally sanctioned performative recollections of (in this case) Polishness. Thus homosexual subjects attaining to the rituals of national bereavement (Chapter 7) or LGBT organisations evoking normality (Chapter 8), break the chains of interlinked subject positions (who is legitimate) and the practices assigned to them (to do/to be what one should do/be, according to their social role/position). And even if in doing so, they deploy some traditional (i.e. perhaps homophobic) tropes of nationhood, the nation is rendered a "hybrid" space of identification for the homosexual subject. This is possible only when nationhood is "illegitimately" used/performed by the "objects" in the act of wilful subversion and mimicry (cf. Chapter 8).

In highlighting the fluctuating modality of the mutual impacts that discourses of nationhood and homosexuality may have on each other, I have also pointed out in Chapter 8 the possible dangers posed when LGBT organisations adopt national referents in their politics. There is a bleak side of the (national) force, and like with fire, it is easy to get burned if one is not careful enough. For example, LGBT activists may be denounced for not adequately responding to the needs of so called "ordinary lesbian and gay people" (Glowania 2009). Also my case studies in Chapter 8 showed LGBT organizers as lacking insight regarding the complex intersection of inequalities, where ideas about sexuality were bound up

with other social locations/"identities" (for example age, education, rootedness in local communities, employment status and so on). My analysis shows that campaigns (and possibly LGBT activism in general) focused solely on sexual orientation and in redeploying some tropes of national discourse, fail to take the complex nature of social divisions into account, and in (not) doing so redraw lines of new *in-group* inequalities (for instance, along the lines of economic status, and/or age). In attaining to the possible in-group divisions that may arise if LGBT activism embraces neoliberal capitalism and liberal democratic ideologies, as the new and unproblematic underpinnings of the new, post-1989 Polishness, speaks to the queer critique of neoliberalism (cf. Chapter 4). At the same time, I want to stress again that I do not take this critique unanimously, at least not without prior contextualisation in the national histories and developments of the liberal democratic and neoliberal capitalist regimes. Although they surely bear many resemblances, thus influencing similar (negative) impact on societies, I am also reminded that it was precisely the economic, political (and cultural) regimes that enabled the emerging homosexual subjectivity and the rise of LGBT activism after 1989 in Poland in the first place. Throughout the thesis, I have highlighted relational complexity between nationhood and homosexuality by focusing on the tension posed for homosexual subjects in Poland when considering the impacts of post-1989 discourses of Polishness.

Here a paragraph dedicated to the European Union (EU) is also necessary. From the cases analysed in Chapters 6 and 8, one can conclude of the EU as an important player, referent, and Other in the relations between Polish nationhood and homosexuality. One that takes up much of the national, as well as the homosexual, subjects' imagination. This suggests that there is valuable insight to be gained from attending to Polish nationhood in the context of a comparative perspective with the "West" which the EU is seen to epitomise. First of all, the EU is an outcome of developing economic interests and political ideologies of a few Western European countries. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the position of the EU is somewhat reversed: it is a driving force (directly or not) behind some of

the most significant changes in the structure of nation-states, and in the ideological underpinnings of political, economic and cultural regimes.

Also the role of the EU in shaping sexual politics in this region is different. As much as current LGBT movements in Western European countries profit from the EU impact in their national context, the EU is a late(er) addition in the history of sexual liberation. We can tentatively say that when the EU was taking its current shape, LGBT movements in some of the most influential countries in the EU (e.g. the UK, France, Germany or Netherlands) were already developed and organized. Conversely, in the CEE context, the shaping of the nation-states, new national ideologies, and sexual politics, coincided with one another in a relatively short and intense period of time - *and* alongside the development/under the influence of the EU. These two rather different trajectories have led to “temporal disjunctions” and narrations of the CEE as “backward/homophobic”, and the “West” as “advanced/pro-gay” (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011). We have yet to see what outcomes this triangular dynamic - where CEE nation-states are emerging, their respective sexual politics are slowly shaping up, with an important role of the third party EU influence - will produce.

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From the very beginning, this thesis tells the story not only of the relations between national and homosexual discourses, but also of my research journey. The position I occupy, an outcome of interlaced choices and events beyond my control, the “limbo” of in-between-ness the “West” and the “CEE”, between the “privilege of research” and “depravity of immigration”, proved to be a productive and beneficial one. Indeed, it was this position that shaped my interests and analytical perspectives, and made the reflection on inequalities in the epistemic field of knowledge production, a part of this research. Having spent six years as a part-time student working on this thesis I have observed (in literature) and experienced (in everyday academic life) how the geographical divisions (“West”/CEE) respectively translate into categories of “knowledge production” and “knowledge consumption”, “theory” and “example/experience”, “universal” and

“particular”. I have also learned that there is not some sort of generalized academic scholarship practice, as long as it is recognised as such through the more and less (and this is: “more *and* less”) structured channels of ratification. These channels of recognition of what “proper” academic scholarship is, do not only conform to the rules and regulation of educational and research institutions. They are also tightly and inherently related to the particular national cultures, with all their norms, customs, and traditions of what constitutes “good” and “bad”, “proper” and “lame”, “in/adequate” and “in/correct”, etc. This learning experience does not break any new ground, but in the context of this particular research project, it is still vital to reflect upon it. How, for example, have “Britishness” and British academic culture shaped the knowledge produced so far about sexuality, nationhood, and CEE? And how it provided at the outset the ground for my research? How did years of schooling and studying in Poland shape my sense of what academic scholarship is about, and how it differs to British perceptions of what “proper” academic scholarship should be? And finally, how these two different academic traditions came to shape my research and this thesis? I do not have any ready answers yet, the ideas are still brewing, but I certainly concur with Ken Plummer’s words (2001, 206):

The social researcher is not a mere medium through which knowledge is discovered; he or she can also be seen as a “constructor” of “knowledge”. We need to look at how the researcher’s personal and social worlds lead to these constructions, and how such constructions are subsequently used in the social world. This is not to deny that there may be some independent truth content in such research; it is merely to recognize that issues of personal experience, social morality and public politics are an ever-present feature of research and need to be firmly confronted.

This reflexive position became helpful in Chapter 4, overviewing literature on sexuality and nationalism. Since scholarship produced in and about the “West”, in predominantly English speaking countries, must for necessary reasons of in/trans/labiltity, have its limits, it became apparent it has (inspiring, yet) limited potential for applicability to the Central and Eastern European setting.

This is where I hope to offer an original contribution to the academic fields of sexuality and nationhood studies, by focusing on the “non-Western” specifically Central and Eastern Europe, and even more precisely Polish cases. While working in the British academic setting, yet still being a “foreigner”, I hope to contribute to the English-speaking academe, by offering insights from the space of *inbetweenness*, without attesting to any particular location or modes of academic scholarship production. (Which, of course, is a little idealistic). In doing so, I hope to go beyond the status of an “informant” about “what it is like to be gay in Poland?”. (For this is the question I am asked far too often during academic events, irrespectively of what is the actual topic of my presentation; and which I believe is a manifestation of hegemonic power/knowledge relations in the epistemic field). Hence the more personal and self-reflective writing partially stems from the desire to overcome this status of a “foreigner”, and play around with my roles as the “informant” and/or the “theory producer”.

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Finally, at the very end, I would like to highlight some possible directions for further research stemming from the findings and implications of this project. Firstly, the prospect of using post-colonial studies to consider the post-communist CEE context. Although only touched on in this thesis, there is a clear potential for further deployment of post-colonial theories in the study of Central and Eastern European “post-communist transformations”. There are already attempts being made to bring the two together (Todorova 1997; Kelertas 2006; Owczarzak 2009), but there is more to do in this respect. Secondly, the premise of empirical exploration of the relationship between discourses of nationhood and homosexuality. Empirical research using a mix of other qualitative and quantitative methods could shed more light on some of the issues and threads raised in this thesis, and proliferate the picture by possibly locating new issues. Thirdly, a broader comparative research is worth considering. Deliberating on different geographical locations could further elucidate on the relationship between the discourses of nationhood and homosexuality. Future work could

consider this relationship in the context of other CEE (or Latin American or African, for that matter) countries that share a similar location as “new democracies” having to do with the emerging LGBT movements. Lastly, a consideration of heteronormativity in Poland could bring interesting results. My research suggests that issues of normalisation are important to consider in the given research project. The role of heteronormativity could be further explored, with a consideration of how and to what extent heteronormativity shapes relations between nationhood and homosexuality.

My research suggests there are multiple ways for scholars to consider nationhood and sexual politics in Poland. Its significance lies in its contribution to the relatively scarce but growing body of work concerned with sexualities in Central and Eastern Europe (Stulhofer and Sandfort 2004; Kuhar and Takács 2007; Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011b). Additionally, we have recently witnessed a rise of concern with “homonationalism” in queer studies. Attention to Poland is a valuable addition to this scholarship, which so far is only about the “West” and “Islam”. Finally, it also contributes to nationalism studies, where sexuality is still an under-explored topic (Pryke 1998; Nagel 1998), and it offers new insights for scholars interested in Polish nationalism studies.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> “**Nationhood**” is used here as a broad term incorporating concepts and ideas about a nation,

<sup>ii</sup> “**LGBT**” stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans” and is the label of choice used by the organisations and individuals who claim to speak in the name of the wider LGBT community, even though they usually do so primarily in the name of gay and lesbian people. The bisexual and trans- people are only nominal referents; yet still, this is the label always used by the organisations, hence I will use it only in reference to organised forms of sexual political activism. I use “**gay and lesbian**” to be more specific than LGBT and also not to perpetuate the false representation of the “B” and “T”, when I speak about these communities. The word order is also important, stressing the gender imbalance in the gay and lesbian communities, where generally gay women are less visible and overshadowed by gay men. I also use “communities” in the plural to avoid homogenisation of diverse groups and subject locations embodied and inhabited by gay and lesbian people. “Gay and lesbian” are also the labels of choice of gay and lesbian people to describe their (sexual) identity.

<sup>iii</sup> “Strong objectivity” is a concept coined by Sandra Harding and denotes “critical reflexivity”.

<sup>iv</sup> “**West**” in this thesis is an idea that brings together geographical, political, ideological, historical and economic referents. It may point to the very precise entities (e.g. EU), but at the same time will always have traces of other geographical locations (e.g. USA, Europe) or ideas (e.g. progress, advancement). Thus, inherent to the idea of the “West” is certain vagueness. It is also understood in this project as a powerful and hegemonic discourse able to impose meanings, thereby shaping the realities. The initial EU appropriation of the “Europe” to define union of some of the Western European countries, setting aside the “Central and Eastern Europe”, is an example of such hegemonic discourses. In this thesis, the “West” is usually defined more from the CEE, Polish and my personal perspective (e.g. “non-Western”), rather than incorporating “Western” self-definitions and self-perceptions. I also consequently write the “West” in quotation marks to highlight that I refer to a construction or social concept, rather than to any particular referent, entity, or location standing behind it. If the tension between the “West” and the more particular location is intended, I will write: “West”/EU or “West”/Europe to indicate this.

<sup>v</sup> “**Figure of the homosexual**” refers to the social construction of what homosexuality and homosexual people are. It is mostly used in relation to the national discourses on homosexuality, which rarely use “gay and lesbian” labels.

<sup>vi</sup> “**Homosexual subject**” refers to the theoretical conceptualisation of the general cultural position of gay and lesbian people (“subjects”), rather than to “concrete”/real people (which are referred to as “gay and lesbian”).

<sup>vii</sup> I use “minority West” and the “majority World” after Raewyn Connell’s *Gender: In the world Perspective* (2009), highlighting transnational dimension of inequalities.

<sup>viii</sup> In 2010, 50% of Poles were against legal abortion (but only 14% is in favour of a total ban), and 45% were in favour of legal pregnancy termination (CBOS 2010a). In 2011, while 97% of society declared themselves as Catholic, only 66% expressed trust to the Catholic Church. In the same time, also 66% was critical of the Church’s involvement in the public and political life. According to the same study, this is a stable social process of rising distrust to the Catholic Church since 1994 (wprost.pl 2011).

<sup>ix</sup> Until recently, the Polish term “Matka Polka” was translated into English as “Polish Mother”. However, “Mother the Pole” in terms of discursive investments in national identity formation is semantically closer to the Polish original. Also, in my opinion it better highlights the woman’s role as a Mother, only through which she becomes a Pole.

<sup>x</sup> It should be noted that the use of images here and later in this chapter is illustrative only; I do not aim to provide detailed analysis, for which I suggest the work of Janion (1996), Ostrowska (2004) and Gorska (2005) as good starting points.

<sup>xi</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Curzon\\_line\\_en.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Curzon_line_en.svg) (accessed on 23.04.2010).



<sup>xii</sup> A 2003 CBOS survey showed that: 23% of Poles liked (original expression used in the survey) Jews; 23% were indifferent; 46% disliked them; and 8% could not decide (CBOS 2003). However, in the January 2010 report (CBOS 2010b), these figures were as follows (respectively): 31%, 35%, 27%, 7%. Figures show clear improvement of perception, however there is still a long way to go.

<sup>xiii</sup> [http://europa.eu/abc/eurojargon/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/eurojargon/index_en.htm) (accessed 24.02.2012).

<sup>xiv</sup> In this old-national vs. young-homosexual dyad, I want to suggest that there are different generations of people behind organisations, parties, media, projects, etc., which in turn influence and generate discourses of the National and the Homosexual. This generational divide is very clear, with all the politicians being of the "dads and uncles" generation (late forties, and mostly fifties and sixties), as opposed to activists mostly in their twenties and early thirties. I base this observation on my own four-year experience of voluntary work in Lambda Association (2001-2005).

<sup>xv</sup> It may be worth mentioning the etymological roots of the word 'freedom'/'wolność' in Polish. 'Wolność' share its stem with 'wola'/'will'; hence 'freedom' means 'to act upon one's will; be in agreement (with oneself); choose' (Brückner 1996). In this context, lesbian and gay men's mourning is an act of *doing* freedom, rather than *acting upon* freedom. In the latter case, acting *upon* it, 'freedom' becomes some sort of abstracted idea, or a state, or a value existing on its own or independently of the subject. This would also mean the possibility of creating various facilitations or obstructions in accessing such constructed "freedom". If we revive freedom's etymological roots in 'will', then freedom can be re-rendered not as something 'external' to the subject, but as the subject's activity of acting on their choice/will. In this sense, mourning can be seen as a bold example of *doing freedom* outside the socially and politically constructed/constrained framework of law/recognition. This is not to say that there are limitless possibilities of agency available to lesbian and gay people, though. (The debate about possibilities of agency is far too complicated for such simple claims).

<sup>xvi</sup> See: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mourn>.

<sup>xvii</sup> This point, nonetheless, needs to be taken with precaution. Simple equation of the homosexual subjects with the liminal would be too quick. For Turner, the liminal is only a transitional period of existence, a space/time between two structured and regulated social orders. The Otherness of the homosexuality, however, seems more a permanent rather than transitional relegation.

<sup>xviii</sup> <http://niechnaszobacza.queers.pl/> (accessed 18.07.2011). This and other translations are my own, unless coming from the English articles or otherwise acknowledged.

<sup>xix</sup> It is important for the further analysis to notice that the Polish word used across cited texts: 'związek', denotes both 'relationship' and slightly different in meaning in English, 'partnership'.

<sup>xx</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections\\_in\\_Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Poland)